

ATTEMPT AT COVERUP.)

2000

TOR: 2120062 AUG 90

231958Z AUG 90

SUBJECT: QUEEN, ELIZABETH

REPORT **FIN**

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PAGE 0002
TOT: 301545Z AUG 90

DIRECTOR 228687

FORCES (ESAF) OFFICERS ARE DISCUSSING PLANS TO ASSASSINATE THE AUXILIARY BISHOP OF SAN SALVADOR, GREGORIO ((ROSA)) CHAVEZ. THE OFFICERS ARE CONSIDERING THIS PLAN IN THE EVENT ESAF COLONEL GUILLERMO ((BENAVIDES)), CURRENTLY IN PRISON FOR ALLEGEDLY ORDERING THE KILLING OF SIX JESUIT PRIESTS AND THEIR HOUSEKEEPERS IN NOVEMBER 1989, IS NOT RELEASED FROM PRISON. THE OFFICERS BELIEVE THAT BY ASSASSINATING ROSA CHAVEZ, GOVERNMENT PROSECUTORS CAN BE LED TO BELIEVE THAT THE MURDERERS OF THE JESUITS ARE STILL AT LARGE, AND THAT SINCE BENAVIDES COULD NOT HAVE PARTICIPATED IN THE ASSASSINATION OF ROSA CHAVEZ, HE PROBABLY WAS THEREFORE NOT INVOLVED IN THE JESUIT KILLINGS. THE OFFICERS HAVE BEGUN TO COLLECT INFORMATION ON ROSA CHAVEZ'S RESIDENCE, SCHEDULE, MOVEMENTS, AND VEHICLE.

2. [REDACTED] COMMENT: THIS POSSIBLE PLAN IS IN ITS EARLIEST STAGE. NO INFORMATION HAS YET BEEN GATHERED ON ROSA CHAVEZ, AND NO CONCRETE PLANS FORMULATED TO CARRY OUT AN ATTACK AGAINST HIM.)

3. [REDACTED] COMMENT: LIKE THE JESUITS, ROSA CHAVEZ IS VIEWED BY ELEMENTS OF THE EXTREME RIGHT AS AN APOLOGIST FOR THE FMLN, IF NOT AN OUTRIGHT FMLN COLLABORATOR. THIS MAKES HIS SELECTION AS THE TARGET FOR THE INCIPIENT AND BIZARRE PLOT OUTLINED ABOVE A LOGICAL ONE FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE PLOTTERS. ROSA CHAVEZ HAS TWO BROTHERS WHO ARE FMLN MILITARY COMMANDERS.)

4. (AMBASSADOR'S COMMENT: WHILE THE ABOVE MUST BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY, A JUNIOR OFFICER DESCRIBING PLOTTING OF THIS NATURE BY AN UNKNOWN NUMBER OF OFFICERS AT UNDEFINED LEVELS OF THE OFFICER CORPS LEAVES IMPORTANT QUESTIONS UNANSWERED. AT THIS POINT, WE COULD BE DEALING WITH NOTHING MORE THAN TWO-THREE JUNIOR OFFICERS RELIEVING THEIR FRUSTRATION WITH DAMAGE DONE TO THEIR INSTITUTION BY THE JESUIT CASE WITH FANCIFUL, AND INCREDIBLY STUPID WISHFUL THINKING THAT THE PROBLEM CAN BE DEALT WITH. IT IS DIFFICULT, BUT NOT IMPOSSIBLE, TO BELIEVE THAT OFFICERS OF RANK OR EXPERIENCE WOULD CONCLUDE THAT IMPLEMENTING SUCH A SCHEME WOULD ALLEVIATE PRESSURE ON THE ESAF. ON THE OTHER HAND, WHY WOULD A GROUP OF JUNIOR OFFICERS GO TO SUCH LENGTHS TO FREE COLONEL BENAVIDES, THE SENIOR OFFICER WHO MOST JUNIOR OFFICERS FEEL HAS BROUGHT THE PROBLEM DOWN ON THEM?)

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
TOT: 051316Z SEP 90 [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
[REDACTED]

DIST: 05 SEPTEMBER 1990
[REDACTED]

COUNTRY: EL SALVADOR

SUBJ: ARMY HIGH COMMAND COMMENTS ON UPCOMING ARMY SENIOR
OFFICER CHANGES; COLONEL PONCE'S PLAN TO ORDER OFFICERS
TO TESTIFY ON THE JESUIT MURDER CASE

DC: LATE AUGUST 1990
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]


TEXT: 1. IN LATE AUGUST 1990 MEMBERS OF THE SALVADORAN ARMED FORCES
(ESAF) HIGH COMMAND MET AMONG THEMSELVES AND WITH SALVADORAN
PRESIDENT ALFREDO ((CRISTIANI)) TO DISCUSS UPCOMING SENIOR OFFICER
CHANGES WITHIN THE ESAF AIMED AT PUTTING MORE CAPABLE OFFICERS IN KEY
POSITIONS, AND REMOVING CORRUPT AND INEFFECTIVE OFFICERS FROM COMMAND
POSITIONS.

2. CHIEF OF STAFF COLONEL RENE EMILIO ((PONCE)), WHO WILL
[REDACTED]

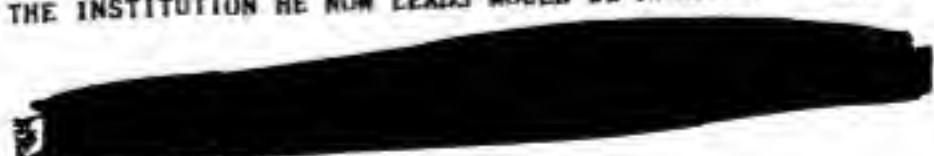
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BECOME MINISTER OF DEFENSE ON 1 SEPTEMBER, TOLD ESAF OFFICERS THAT HE HAS SECURED THE SUPPORT OF THE U.S. AMBASSADOR TO EL SALVADOR TO BECOME DEFENSE MINISTER, BUT THAT THE U.S. AMBASSADOR HAD ASKED PONCE'S HELP IN RESOLVING THE JESUIT MURDER CASE. PONCE SAID THAT HIS FIRST ACT AS DEFENSE MINISTER WOULD BE TO ORDER EVERY OFFICER WHO ATTENDED A 15 NOVEMBER 1989 MEETING AT THE MILITARY ACADEMY, TO PROVIDE FORMAL DECLARATIONS TO THE JUDGE IN CHARGE OF THE CASE.



6. (AMBASSADOR'S COMMENT: PONCE'S DEPICTION OF MY HAVING "ASKED HIS HELP IN RESOLVING THE JESUIT CASE" IS A SERIOUSLY UNDERSTATED DESCRIPTION OF MY MESSAGE ON WHAT THE NEW MINISTER OF DEFENSE HAD TO DO TO CHANGE PERCEPTIONS OF HIS AND THE ESAF'S PERFORMANCE VIS A VIS THE JESUIT INVESTIGATION. I TOLD PONCE THAT ABSENT BOLD, IMMEDIATE AND DRAMATIC ACTIONS IN HIS VERY FIRST DAYS AS MINISTER, HE AND THE IMAGE OF THE INSTITUTION HE NOW LEADS WOULD BE DAMAGED, POSSIBLY



[REDACTED] [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
TOP SECRET SEP 90 [REDACTED]

BEYOND REPAIR. THE WORDS THUS WENT FAR BEYOND THE GENTLE "WE WOULD APPRECIATE WHATEVER YOU CAN DO TO HELP US" APPROACH THAT PONDIC APPEARS TO HAVE CONVEYED TO FELLOW OFFICERS.)

[REDACTED]

TOR: 112136Z SEP 90

12014Z SEP 90

SUBJECT: ALLEGATION THAT CAMILO HERNANDEZ WAS DELIBERATELY WOUNDED BY ESAF AND ESAF OFFICERS' COMMENTS THAT HERNANDEZ' WEAPON WAS USED IN THE JESUIT KILLINGS

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[REDACTED]

5.

[REDACTED] IN LATE AUGUST 1990, [REDACTED] STATED THAT LIEUTENANT COLONEL CAMILO ((HERNANDEZ)), THE DEPUTY COMMANDER OF THE BELLOSO IMMEDIATE REACTION INFANTRY BATTALION AND FORMER SUB-DIRECTOR OF THE SALVADORAN ARMED FORCES (ESAF) MILITARY ACADEMY DURING THE LATE 1989 INSURGENT OFFENSIVE, WAS WOUNDED DELIBERATELY IN THE FIELD ON 18 AUGUST. [REDACTED] AN UNIDENTIFIED INDIVIDUAL IN THE INFLUENTIAL GROUP OF SENIOR MILITARY OFFICERS KNOWN AS THE "TANDONA" (MILITARY CLASS OF 1966) ATTEMPTED TO HAVE HERNANDEZ KILLED BECAUSE OF HIS INVOLVEMENT IN THE 16 NOVEMBER 1989 KILLING OF THE JESUIT PRIESTS. [REDACTED] THE INCIDENT OCCURRED AFTER THE BASE CAMP IN WHICH HERNANDEZ WAS ENCAMPED WAS SECURED AND [REDACTED] THERE WAS NO CONTACT WITH INSURGENT FORCES AT THE TIME. AN ESAF ARMY LIEUTENANT WAS WOUNDED AND TWO SOLDIERS WERE KILLED IN THE SAME EXPLOSION.

6. COMMENT: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] HERNANDEZ WAS WOUNDED IN AN INSURGENT ATTACK WHICH TOOK PLACE WHILE THE BELLOSO COMMAND POST WAS CHANGING POSITIONS AT 0200 HOURS IN THE MORNING ON 18 AUGUST IN THE AREA OF SAN JOSE LAS FLORES, WESTERN CHALATENANGO DEPARTMENT. THE BELLOSO COMMAND ELEMENT WAS FOLLOWING A PATH IT HAD USED PREVIOUSLY AND WAS MOVING TOWARD A LOCATION IT HAD USED AS A COMMAND POST EARLIER. THE INSURGENTS APPARENTLY ANTICIPATED THE BELLOSO'S MOVEMENTS AND MINED AN AREA ALONG THE PATH. AS THE UNIT PASSED, THE INSURGENTS DETONATED SIX APPARENTLY IMPROVISED MINES, CAUSING SEVERAL CASUALTIES. AS OTHERS IN THE BELLOSO UNIT CAME TO THE ASSISTANCE OF THOSE WHO HAD BEEN HURT, THE INSURGENTS DETONATED SIX MORE MINES. TWO SOLDIERS WERE KILLED AND AT LEAST SEVEN WOUNDED IN THIS INCIDENT. HERNANDEZ SUFFERED A HEAD WOUND AND, AS OF 7 SEPTEMBER, WAS STILL IN THE MILITARY HOSPITAL UNDERGOING TREATMENT.)

7.

[REDACTED] HERNANDEZ HAD SAID TO ANOTHER UNIDENTIFIED ARMY OFFICER THAT IF THE INVESTIGATION INTO THE JESUIT KILLINGS GOT TOO CLOSE TO HIM, HE WOULD REVEAL THE FULL DETAILS OF ESAF INVOLVEMENT IN THE KILLINGS.

8.

[REDACTED] SAID SEPARATELY THAT HERNANDEZ WAS A KEY FIGURE BEHIND, AND MAY HAVE ORDERED, THE [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

JESUIT KILLINGS. [REDACTED] SAID THE AK-47 USED IN THE SLAYINGS BELONGED TO HERNANDEZ AND WAS LOANED TO THE KILLERS BY HERNANDEZ. HERNANDEZ HAD ACQUIRED THE CAPTURED FMFN WEAPON WHILE HE WAS THE THIRD BRIGADE OPERATIONS OFFICER IN SAN MIGUEL DURING A PREVIOUS ASSIGNMENT. AT THE TIME OF THE MURDERS, ACCORDING TO THE SENIOR OFFICER, THERE WERE NO AK-47'S ASSIGNED TO THE MILITARY ACADEMY.

9.

[REDACTED] IN EARLY JULY 1990,

SAID THAT HE WITNESSED HERNANDEZ PASSING AN AK-47 TO AN ATACATL BATTALION OFFICER ON THE EVENING OF 15 NOVEMBER 1989, JUST PRIOR TO THE UNIT'S DEPARTURE FROM THE MILITARY ACADEMY. DURING THE INVESTIGATION WHICH FOLLOWED THE JESUIT PRIEST MURDERS, IT WAS PROVEN THAT AN AK-47 WAS ONE OF THE WEAPONS USED TO KILL AT LEAST ONE OF THE JESUITS.

[REDACTED]

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SUBJECT

A. TWO PLUS ITEMS RE THE JESUIT MURDERS:

██████████ TOLD ██████████ THAT HE VISITED LT. COL. CAMILO ((HERNANDEZ)) WHILE THE LATTER WAS STILL UNDER DETENTION. ██████████ HERNANDEZ SAID THAT IF THE PRESSURE ON HIM CONTINUES, HE WOULD FINGER COL. RENE EMILIO ((PONCE)). PER ██████████ THE EXACT PHRASE USED BY HERNANDEZ WAS "SI ME SIGAN APRETANDO, VOY A PONER EL DEDO A PONCE." HERNANDEZ WAS SET FREE SHORTLY THEREAFTER.

██████████ TOLD ██████████ THAT HE KNOWS WHO GAVE AN AK-47 TO HERNANDEZ WHICH WAS USED IN THE

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UNIVERSITY THE NIGHT OF THE JESUIT MURDERS. [REDACTED] DID NOT IDENTIFY TO [REDACTED] WHO THIS PERSON IS. [REDACTED] SPENT HOURS FROM AN AK-47, WHICH IS NOT MILITARY ISSUE, WERE FOUND AT THE MURDER SCENE. [REDACTED]

UNIVERSITY THE NIGHT OF THE JESUIT MURDERS. [REDACTED] DID NOT IDENTIFY TO [REDACTED] WHO THIS PERSON IS. [REDACTED] SPENT HOURS FROM AN AK-47, WHICH IS NOT MILITARY ISSUE, WERE FOUND AT THE MURDER SCENE. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

[REDACTED]

DIST: 03 OCTOBER 1990

[REDACTED]

COUNTRY: EL SALVADOR

SUBJ: MILITARY PRESSURE ON THE MINISTER OF DEFENSE TO RESOLVE
JESUIT MURDER CASE AND ADDRESS CORRUPTION IN THE
SALVADORAN MILITARY

[REDACTED]

TEXT: 1. IN EARLY OCTOBER 1990, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] STATED THAT MEMBERS OF TWO SALVADORAN MILITARY
GRADUATING CLASSES, OR "TANDAS," ARE PRESSURING MINISTER OF DEFENSE
COLONEL RENE EMILIO ((PONCE)) TO RESOLVE THE JESUIT MURDER CASE AND
ELIMINATE WIDESPREAD CORRUPTION IN THE SENIOR ECHELONS OF THE
SALVADORAN ARMED FORCES (ESAF). [REDACTED] HE
ATTENDED A PARTY AT WHICH SENIOR MILITARY OFFICERS DISCUSSED THE
PRESSURE BEING APPLIED ON PONCE BY THE "TANDA" OF ESAF LT. COL.

[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

CAMILO ((HERNANDEZ)), AND ANOTHER TANDA (NFI), TO RESOLVE THE ABOVE ISSUES. THE PARTICIPANTS IN THE DISCUSSION WERE SIGIFREDO ((OCHOA)) PEREZ, FORMER ESAF COLONEL AND CURRENT PRESIDENT OF THE LEMPA RIVER HYDROELECTRIC COMMISSION; RETIRED GENERAL RAFAEL HUMBERTO ((LARIOS)), FORMER MINISTER OF DEFENSE; RETIRED GENERAL JUAN RAFAEL ((BUSTILLO)), FORMER COMMANDER OF THE SALVADORAN AIR FORCE; AND ROBERTO ((D'AUBUISSON)), PRESIDENT FOR LIFE OF ARENA. [REDACTED] COMMENT: HERNANDEZ GRADUATED FROM THE SALVADORAN MILITARY ACADEMY IN 1973.)

2. [REDACTED] THE PARTICIPANTS AGREED ON THE NEED TO RESOLVE THE ABOVE ISSUES IMMEDIATELY AND THAT THE MEMBERS OF THE "TANDONA," (SALVADORAN MILITARY ACADEMY CLASS OF 1966) MUST BE FORCED INTO RETIREMENT IN ORDER TO PURGE THE ESAF OF ITS MOST CORRUPT MEMBERS. [REDACTED] THE PARTICIPANTS EMPHASIZED THE NECESSITY FOR IMMEDIATE ACTION; [REDACTED] SINGLED OUT D'AUBUISSON AS THE PARTICIPANT WHO REPEATEDLY STRESSED THE NEED FOR ACTION ON PONCE'S PART; FAILING ACTION BY PONCE, D'AUBUISSON SAID "SOMETHING WILL HAVE TO BE DONE." [REDACTED] BUSTILLO VOCIFEROUSLY REPLIED THAT HE COULD GUARANTEE PILOTS AND "ELITE TROOPS" TO INTERVENE IN THE GOVERNMENT OF PRESIDENT ALFREDO ((CRISTIANI)) IF IT WERE DEEMED NECESSARY.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

TUT: 212220Z FEB 91 [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

[REDACTED]

DIST: 21 FEBRUARY 1991

COUNTRY: EL SALVADOR

SUBJ: JOINT STAFF PERCEPTIONS OF THE JESUIT CASE

DOI: MID-FEBRUARY 1991

[REDACTED]

TEXT: 1. IN MID-FEBRUARY 1991 [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] JOINT GENERAL STAFF (EMCFA)
PERCEPTION OF THE JESUIT CASE AND PROGRESS IN THE CASE.
[REDACTED] THE ISSUE IS SIMPLY NOT DISCUSSED WITHIN THE EMCFA, AND
THAT THE CASE APPEARS TO BE STALLED WITHIN THE SALVADORAN JUDICIAL
SYSTEM.

2. [REDACTED] SINCE DECEMBER 1990, WHEN U.S.
MILITARY AID TO SALVADOR WAS TENTATIVELY RESTORED, THE JESUIT CASE
HAS NOT BEEN AN ISSUE IN THE EMCFA. NEITHER MINISTER OF DEFENSE
[REDACTED]

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SILENCE: A. NEITHER PONCE NOR RUBIO BELIEVE THEY SHOULD TELL THE JUDICIAL SYSTEM HOW TO OPERATE, AND APPROACHING PRESIDENT ALFREDO ((CRISTIANI)) TO SOLICIT ACTION IN THE CASE WOULD BE AN AFFRONT TO CRISTIANI.

B. THE ESAF IS AT A VERY VOLATILE STAGE IN ITS HISTORY. IN LATE 1990 THE ESAF CONSIDERED REDUCING ITS FORCES BY THIRTY PERCENT, AND MORALE SUFFERED. AFTER THE FARABUNDO MARTI LIBERATION FRONT (FMLN) NOVEMBER 1990 OFFENSIVE, THE ESAF SHELVED REDUCTION PLANS, AND BEGAN TO INCREASE ITS RANKS, AS WELL AS EMPHASIZING COMBAT EFFICIENCY. THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN AND ATTENDANT FMLN VIOLENCE, ALONG WITH THE POSSIBILITY OF ANOTHER FMLN NATIONAL LEVEL OFFENSIVE, HAVE MADE SENIOR ESAF OFFICERS LOATHED TO UPSET THE DELICATE SITUATION WHICH THE ESAF IS CURRENTLY EXPERIENCING IN TERMS OF MORALE, MISSION EFFECTIVENESS AND TROOP STRENGTH. CONSEQUENTLY, THE EMCFA WILL LIKELY IGNORE THE JESUIT CASE UNTIL CIRCUMSTANCES DICTATE OTHERWISE.

<> COUNTRY: EL <><>SALVADOR<><>
<> SUBJ: HIGH LEVEL ESAF MEETING TO DISCUSS THE <><>JESUIT<><> CASE
DOI: MID-MARCH 1991
SOURCE: A SOURCE WHOSE PAST REPORTING IS INSUFFICIENT TO
ESTABLISH A DEGREE OF SUBSTANTIATION.

2. VARGAS CALLED THE MEETING TO INFORM THE OFFICERS OF A LETTER WHICH MINISTER OF DEFENSE GENERAL RENE EMILIO ((PONCE)) SENT TO THE <><>SALVADORAN<><> MINISTER OF JUSTICE ON 15 MARCH 1991, SUGGESTING <> THE MINISTER OF JUSTICE EXPAND THE INVESTIGATION IN THE <><>JESUIT<><> MURDER CASE AND THAT SEVERAL ESAF OFFICERS WHO HAD PRESENTED STATEMENTS ON THE CASE BE RECALLED TO TESTIFY AGAIN.

4. [REDACTED] THE CONSENSUS AMONG THE OFFICERS AT THE MEETING WAS THAT COLONEL GUTIERMO ((BENAVIDES)) HAD ALMOST CERTAINLY GIVEN THE ORDER TO MURDER THE <<>JESUITS<>. [REDACTED] ALTHOUGH VARGAS DID NOT OPENLY AGREE WITH THIS ASSESSMENT, HE SEEMED TO TACITLY CONFIRM IT. VARGAS WAS SOMEWHAT SYMPATHETIC TO BENAVIDES, REMARKING THAT BENAVIDES IS NO LONGER CONCERNED WITH HIS CAREER, BUT WITH THE PROSPECT OF GOING TO PRISON FOR 30 YEARS.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

[REDACTED]

DIST: 12 MARCH 1991

COUNTRY: EL SALVADOR

SUBJ: DISCUSSIONS AMONG SENIOR SALVADORAN MILITARY OFFICERS
REGARDING THE JESUIT CASE

DOI: EARLY MARCH 1991

[REDACTED]

TEXT: 1. IN EARLY MARCH 1991

[REDACTED] VERY CLOSED
DISCUSSIONS AMONG SOME ESAF COLONELS AND LIEUTENANT COLONELS
REGARDING THE JESUIT CASE. [REDACTED] WHILE THE
OFFICIAL POLICY OF THE JOINT GENERAL COMMAND (EMCPA) REMAINS ONE OF
SILENCE ABOUT THE CASE, SOME SENIOR ESAF OFFICERS DISCUSS THIS ISSUE
IN CONFIDENCE. [REDACTED] THE CONSENSUS OF THESE OFFICERS IS THAT
THOSE ACCUSED IN THE CASE ARE GUILTY, BUT WILL RECEIVE LITTLE OR NO
PUNISHMENT. THEY AGREE THAT THIS WILL HAVE VERY SERIOUS
REPERCUSSIONS ON SALVADORAN RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES.

2. [REDACTED] WHILE NO ESAF OFFICER WOULD
DISCUSS THIS CASE OFFICIALLY OR OPENLY, THE OVERWHELMING MAJORITY OF
THE OFFICERS WHO COMMENT PRIVATELY BELIEVE THAT COLONEL GUILLERMO
((BENAVIDES)) DID IN FACT ORDER THE KILLING OF THE JESUITS. THESE
OFFICERS SPECULATE THAT BENAVIDES DID NOT MAKE THE DECISION ALONE;
HOWEVER, THEY DO NOT HAVE A GOOD SENSE OF WHETHER ANYONE HIGHER UP IN
THE ESAF STRUCTURE WAS INVOLVED IN THE ACTUAL DECISION. THE
OFFICERS, AMONG THEM JOINT STAFF OPERATIONS DIRECTOR COLONEL ROMAN
ALFONSO ((BARRERA)), BELIEVE THE DELIBERATE MANNER IN WHICH THE
TROOPS CARRIED OUT THE MURDERS GIVES SENIOR OFFICERS THE IMPRESSION
THAT THEY WERE CARRYING OUT SPECIFIC ORDERS.

3. DESPITE THIS CONSENSUS, SENIOR OFFICERS ALSO BELIEVE THE
OFFICERS ACCUSED IN THE CASE WILL PROBABLY BE ACQUITTED OF AT LEAST
THE MAJOR CHARGES, AND POSSIBLY EXONERATED COMPLETELY. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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4. ALL THE SENIOR OFFICERS WHO PARTICIPATE IN PRIVATE DISCUSSIONS OF THE JESUIT CASE AGREE THAT THE ALMOST INEVITABLE MISPRISION OF JUSTICE WILL SEVERELY DAMAGE FUTURE U.S./EL SALVADOR RELATIONS, ESPECIALLY IN TERMS OF MILITARY ASSISTANCE. THEY REALIZE THE U.S. CONGRESS KNOWS PROGRESS IN THIS CASE IS NONEXISTENT, AND THAT THE MILITARY AID THEY HOPE TO RECEIVE IN MARCH 1991 IS VERY MUCH CONTINGENT ON POSITIVE RESULTS IN THE CASE. THEY ALSO UNDERSTAND, HOWEVER, THAT INTERNAL ESAF DYNAMICS AND THE INVOLVEMENT OF THE "TANDONA" (THE MILITARY ACADEMY CLASS OF 1966) WILL COME INTO PLAY, AND DESPAIR OF A SUCCESSFUL AND FAIR OUTCOME.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

TOR 181706Z MAR 91

1703Z MAR 91

SUBJECT: IMPROVEMENT OF HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES BY
SALVADORAN AIRFORCE

[REDACTED]

2. [REDACTED], DELIBERATE AND SANCTIONED HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES CEASED IN THE SALVADORAN AIRFORCE (FAES) A-11 DEPARTMENT AFTER THE APPOINTMENT OF MAJOR GL [REDACTED] ((RIVERA)) IN SEPTEMBER 1989. RIVERA ISSUED AN ORDER SHORTLY AFTER TAKING OVER THE A-11 THAT HE WOULD NOT CONCERN THE KILLINGS AND TORTURE OF PRISONERS AND ANY A-11 EMPLOYEES WHO CHOSE TO DO SO WOULD BE HELD ACCOUNTABLE. MAJOR MIGUEL ANTONIO ((MOJICA)) PADILLO, SUCCEEDED RIVERA IN OCTOBER 1989 AND CONTINUED HIS FAIR HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY. [REDACTED] NOTED THAT ONE OF THE MAIN CAUSES FOR THE A-11'S DEPARTURE FROM PAST PRACTICES IS STEADFAST COUNSELLING OF U.S. POLICY AGAINST SUCH ACTIVITIES, AND THE GROWING SUCCESS AND COMMENSURATE FAES COMMITMENT AND PRIDE IN THE AIRBORNE RECONNAISSANCE PROGRAM

3. PRIOR TO RIVERA'S ASSIGNMENT TO THE A-2 POSITION GROSS HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES WERE COMMON AT THE FAES.

[REDACTED]

4. IN MID-1988, LEIVA WAS ASSIGNED AS THE FIRST A-11 UNDER THE NEWLY ORGANIZED AIR GENERAL STAFF. (PRIOR TO THE FORMATION OF THE AIR GENERAL STAFF, THE A-11 WAS CALLED THE S-2 SECTION.) LEIVA HAD JUST RETURNED FROM TRAINING AT THE U.S. AIR FORCE COMMAND AND STAFF SCHOOL AND HAD EXPECTED TO BE ASSIGNED TO THE MORE POWERFUL A-111, CHIEF OF OPERATIONS, POSITION. HOWEVER, LEIVA'S APPOINTMENT TO A-111 HAD BEEN BLOCKED BY LIEUTENANT COLONEL JUAN ANTONIO ((MARTINEZ)) VARELA, WHO CONVINCED THEN-FAES COMMANDER GENERAL JUAN ((BUSTILLO)) THAT LEIVA WAS AN OVERLY INDEPENDENT AND AMBITIOUS OFFICER. WHEN VARELA WAS ASSIGNED AS DEPUTY COMMANDER OF COMALAPA AIR BASE IN 1988, LEIVA CONVINCED BUSTILLO TO APPOINT HIM AS THE

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A-111. MAJOR JORGE ALBERTO ((QUINONES)) ROBLES WAS THEN ASSIGNED AS A-11. WITHIN TWO MONTHS, HOWEVER, QUINONES WAS SENT TO THE U.S. ARMY ADVANCED INFANTRY COURSE AT FORT BENNING, GEORGIA SO LEIVA RETAINED CONTROL OVER THE A-11 SECTION UNTIL THE SEPTEMBER 1989 APPOINTMENT OF MAJOR GUILLERMO ERNESTO ((RIVERA)) RODRIGUEZ TO THE A-11 POSITION.

5. [REDACTED] LEIVA EARNED A REPUTATION AS AN AGGRESSIVE, INDEPENDENT, AND SOMETIMES ARROGANT OFFICER. HE HAD BEEN THE CATALYST FOR THE SUCCESS OF THE RAPID RESPONSE AIRMOBILE "LIGHTING OPERATIONS" IN 1985 AND 1986 BY LEADING BOMBING ATTACKS, DIRECTING OPERATIONS FROM THE COMMAND HELICOPTER, AND LEADING TROOPS ON THE GROUND.

[REDACTED] LEIVA ALSO BELIEVED IN EXTREME MEASURES (EVEN BY SALVADORAN STANDARDS) AGAINST INSURGENTS OPERATING CLANDESTINELY IN URBAN AREAS. [REDACTED] LEIVA HAD TAKEN A LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM THE FAES IN THE EARLY 1980'S TO SERVE AS ROBERTO ((D'AUBUISSON'S)) PERSONAL PILOT AND PARTICIPATE IN D'AUBUISSON'S DEATH SQUADS (NO FURTHER DETAILS). [REDACTED] SPECULATED LEIVA WAS INVOLVED IN THE PLOT TO ASSASSINATE ARCHBISHOP ROMERO WHILE WORKING WITH D'AUBUISSON, ALTHOUGH THERE IS ABSOLUTELY NO PROOF OF [REDACTED] ALLEGATION.

6. [REDACTED] PROVIDED SEVERAL EXAMPLES WHICH DEMONSTRATED LEIVA'S AGGRESSIVE AND RADICAL APPROACH TOWARD COUNTERINSURGENT OPERATIONS WHILE SERVING AS A-11:

A. [REDACTED] TOLD [REDACTED] THAT HE HAD PERSONALLY KILLED ELEVEN SUSPECTED GUERRILLAS BY THROWING THEM BOUND BUT ALIVE FROM AN FAES C-47 AT NIGHT OVER THE PACIFIC OCEAN UNDER ORDERS FROM LEIVA IN 1988. [REDACTED] SAID FOUR OF THE PRISONERS WERE FROM A-11 HOLDING CELLS. THE REMAINING SEVEN WERE DELIVERED TO THE AIRCRAFT JUST PRIOR TO TAKE OFF BY PARACHUTE BATTALION COMMANDER MAJOR BENI ((RODRIGUEZ)) HURTADO. THE AIRCRAFT WAS PILOTTED BY CAPTAIN RAFAEL HUMBERTO ((PALACIOS)) PENA.

B. [REDACTED] FROM WHICH HE BELIEVES AT LEAST 10 BOUND PRISONERS WERE DROPPED ALIVE OVER THE OCEAN. [REDACTED] SAID [REDACTED] HAD BEEN ORDERED BY LEIVA TO ADVISE UNIDENTIFIED PERSONNEL ESCORTING THE PRISONERS WHEN HE WAS 15 MINUTES FROM THE SALVADORAN COAST HEADING OVER THE OCEAN. THE PRISONERS, WHICH [REDACTED] SEEN LOADED ONTO THE AIRCRAFT, WERE GONE WHEN [REDACTED] RETURNED [REDACTED] AND HE HAD MADE NO OTHER LANDINGS.

C. [REDACTED] HE HAD PERSONALLY EXECUTED FIVE SUSPECTED CRIMINALS IN [REDACTED] BY SHOOTING THEM IN THE HEAD AND DISPOSING OF THE BODIES BY HELICOPTER OVER GUAZAPA VOLCANO. [REDACTED] LEIVA AUTHORIZED THE MISSION AND BRIEFED PILOT LT HUGO ORESTES ((VASQUEZ)) PENATE AND 2LT JUAN CARLOS ((ORANTES)) MORAN TO LOAD "SPECIAL CARGO" AT THE DARK END OF THE RUNWAY [REDACTED] AND DROP IT AT HIS ORDER OVER GUAZAPA. [REDACTED] SAID HE HAD KILLED OTHERS SUSPECTED OF HEINOUS CRIMES IN THE SOYAPANGO/ILOPANGO AREA AT THE EXPRESS ORDER OF GENERAL BUSTILLO WHO WAS BRIEFED ON THE KILLINGS.

D. [REDACTED] AN A-11 CASE OFFICER, SAID IN MID-1990 THAT IN 1988 THE A-11 DEPARTMENT HAD HELD IN SECRET TWO OLDER SALVADORAN MEN AS SUSPECTED FMLN INSURGENTS FOR ABOUT FOUR MONTHS, WELL OVER THE 72-HOUR LEGAL HOLDING LIMIT. INTERROGATION AND INVESTIGATION FAILED TO SUPPORT THE A-11'S SUSPICIONS. INSTEAD OF RELEASING THE TWO MEN AND FACING PROBLEMS OVER THE LENGTHY AND ILLEGAL DETENTION, UNIDENTIFIED A-11 EMPLOYEES EXECUTED THEM AND SECRETLY DISPOSED OF THE BODIES. [REDACTED] NOTED THAT ENLISTED MEN WOULD LIKELY NEVER HAVE MADE THIS DECISION ON THEIR OWN AND THAT LEIVA LIKELY GAVE THE ORDER DIRECTLY [REDACTED]

E. [REDACTED] THE PRACTICE OF DROPPING PRISONERS FROM FRES HELICOPTERS AND AIRPLANES WAS CALLED "NIGHT FREE FALL TRAINING" AND WAS COMMON DURING LEIVA'S TERM AS A-11 AND A-111. IN FACT, LEIVA EARNED A REPUTATION AS BEING THE SENIOR DUTY OFFICER TO SEE TO GET SUCH ACTIVITIES APPROVED. [REDACTED] BRAGGED [REDACTED] THAT HE HAD FLOWN MANY NIGHT FREE FALL TRAINING MISSIONS. NO FURTHER DETAILS WERE PROVIDED.

7. [REDACTED] ONE OF THE MOST NOTORIOUS HIT MEN OF THE LEIVA A-11 WAS ISMAEL KENDEZ ((REYES)) AKA "RAMON". RAMON WAS A SURVIVOR OF THE "MORAZAN COMMANDOS", A LEGENDARY SPECIAL UNIT BASED IN MORAZAN IN THE LATE 1970'S. RAMON WORKED FOR ECHEVARRIA UNTIL HE LEFT THE A-11 IN JANUARY 1990. [REDACTED] RAMON REPORTEDLY NOW RUNS A BROTHEL IN SAN SALVADOR. [REDACTED] SAID RAMON WAS REPUTED TO BE A BRAVE AND RUTHLESS KILLER OF INSURGENTS AND WAS TASKED WITH ONLY THE MOST DIFFICULT AND DANGEROUS MISSIONS. HE SAID RAMON WAS SENT ALONE TO KILL THREE ARMED GUERRILLAS SURVEILLING AN A-11 OPERATION JUST BEFORE THE 1988 OFFENSIVE. DURING THE SAME PERIOD, RAMON TOOK IT UPON HIMSELF TO TRACK DOWN THREE ARMED GUERRILLAS WHO HAD BLOWN UP A BUS (AFTER CHASING AWAY THE PASSENGERS) ON WHICH HE WAS RIDING. RAMON FOUND THE ATTACKERS ENJOYING THEIR VICTORY IN A NEARBY CAPE AND DESPATCHED ALL THREE BEFORE THEY COULD DEFEND THEMSELVES.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

COUNTRY: EL SALVADOR

SUBJ: MINISTER OF DEFENSE PONCE'S ORDERS TO MILITARY
OFFICERS FOR RENEWED COOPERATION IN THE JESUIT CASE

DOI: EARLY APRIL 1991

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

TEXT: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] IN LATE FEBRUARY PONCE MET WITH BATTALION
COMMANDERS AND ORDERED THEM TO INFORM ALL MILITARY PERSONNEL
MENTIONED IN HIS 22 FEBRUARY LETTER TO MINISTER OF JUSTICE RENE
(HERNANDEZ) VALIENTE TO COOPERATE IN THE INVESTIGATION OF THE
JESUIT MURDERS. PONCE DID NOT CALL A MEETING OF THE MILITARY
PERSONNEL SPECIFICALLY MENTIONED IN THE LETTER TO PERSONALLY DIRECT
THEM TO COOPERATE. [REDACTED] COMMENT: THE 22 FEBRUARY LETTER, SENT BY
PONCE AS AN APPARENT INDICATION OF MILITARY SUPPORT FOR RESOLUTION OF
THE JESUIT CASE, NAMED 12 MILITARY OFFICERS TO BE RECALLED AND

[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

INVESTIGATED FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON THE CASE.)
COMMENT: PONCE'S DESIRE TO RESOLVE THE JESUIT CASE IS GENUINE AS HE
REALIZES THE POTENTIALLY DISASTROUS EFFECT IT COULD HAVE ON BOTH U.S.
MILITARY AID AND U.S./SALVADORAN RELATIONS IN GENERAL.)

[REDACTED]

END OF MESSAGE

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

SUBJECT: [REDACTED] - COMMENTS ON ESAF OPINION
REGARDING THE JESUIT CASE

[REDACTED]

1. IN EARLY APRIL 1981, A SENIOR SALVADORAN ARMED FORCES (ESAF) OFFICER COMMENTED ON THE CURRENT ATMOSPHERE WITHIN THE JOINT GENERAL STAFF (EMCFA) REGARDING THE JESUIT CASE. HE NOTED THAT AFTER THE MEETING IN WHICH COLONEL MAURICIO ERNESTO ((VARGAS)) DISCUSSED A LETTER THE HIGH COMMAND HAD SENT TO THE SALVADORAN MINISTER OF JUSTICE, ASKING THAT THE INVESTIGATION BE AMPLIFIED AND THAT WITNESSES BE RECALLED TO TESTIFY, THE TOPIC HAS ONCE AGAIN CEASED TO EXIST.

2. [REDACTED] COMMENT: ONE REASON FOR THIS MAY BE THAT THE EMCFA HAS BEEN FOCUSING ITS ATTENTION ON THE UPCOMING ROUND OF PEACE TALKS, SCHEDULED TO START IN MEXICO CITY ON 4 APRIL. THE HIGH COMMAND WOULD NOT HAVE SENT THE LETTER TO THE MINISTER OF JUSTICE OF ITS OWN VOLITION AND MUST HAVE RECEIVED EXTERNAL PRESSURE TO MAKE SUCH A GESTURE. THIS PRESSURE PROBABLY CAME FROM THE OFFICE OF PRESIDENT ALFREDO ((CRISTIANI)). FURTHER, CRISTIANI PROBABLY ALSO WAS RESPONDING TO EXTERNAL PRESSURE, BECAUSE APPROACHING THE HIGH COMMAND WITH AN ULTIMATUM SUCH AS THIS WOULD NOT ENDEAR HIM TO THE HIGH COMMAND.)

[REDACTED]

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SUBJECT: [REDACTED] COUNTRY COMMENTARY: ATTITUDE OF THE
SKEVADOKAN ARMED FORCES ON THE JESUIT CASE

SUBJECT: COUNTRY COMMENTARY - ASSESSMENT OF SALVADORAN JOINT
GENERAL STAFF'S ATTITUDES TOWARD THE JESUIT MURDER
INVESTIGATION

1. IN A LETTER TO THE MINISTER OF JUSTICE DATED 22 FEBRUARY 1991, THE SALVADORAN ARMED FORCES JOINT GENERAL STAFF (EMCFA) REQUESTED THAT THE MINISTRY OF JUSTICE AMPLIFY ITS INVESTIGATION INTO THE MURDERS OF SIX JESUIT PRIESTS AND TWO CIVILIANS ON 16 NOVEMBER 1989. IN THE LETTER, THE EMCFA

[REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

SUGGESTED THAT THE MINISTRY OF JUSTICE, THROUGH THE SPECIAL INVESTIGATIVE UNIT (SIU), INVESTIGATE A MEETING WHICH OCCURRED AT THE MILITARY SCHOOL ON THE EVENING OF 15 NOVEMBER 1989, AND ONCE AGAIN QUESTION THE ALLEGED PARTICIPANTS OF THIS MEETING.

2. [REDACTED] CAN ONLY SPECULATE AS TO THE MOTIVE WHY, AFTER ALMOST ONE AND A HALF YEARS, THE EMCFA, AND MINISTER OF DEFENSE RENE EMILIO ((PONCE)) IN PARTICULAR, WOULD SUDDENLY SHOW CONCERN FOR THE CONDUCT OF THE INVESTIGATION INTO THE JESUIT MURDERS AND THE 15 NOVEMBER 1989 MEETING AT THE MILITARY SCHOOL. SOME POSSIBLE MOTIVES INCLUDE:

A. PONCE WANTED TO INFLUENCE THE U.S. TO RELEASE THE MILITARY AID FUNDS WHICH WERE TO BECOME AVAILABLE ONE WEEK LATER.

B. THERE IS AN EFFORT BY THE EMCFA TO FURTHER CONFUSE AND DELAY THE TRIAL BY INTRODUCING A NEW LINE OF INVESTIGATION.

C. PONCE RECEIVED PRESSURE FROM PRESIDENT ALFREDO ((CRISTIANI)) AND THE GOVERNMENT OF EL SALVADOR TO BE MORE FORTHCOMING IN THE INVESTIGATION.

D. PONCE AND THE EMCFA ARE SINCERE IN THEIR DESIRE TO RESOLVE THIS CASE AND ARE JUST BEING HELPFUL.

3. IT IS ENTIRELY POSSIBLE THAT PONCE DID, IN FACT, TIME THIS ANNOUNCEMENT TO INFLUENCE THE U.S. CONGRESSIONAL DECISION TO RELEASE MILITARY AID. PONCE IS WELL AWARE OF THE IMPORTANCE THE U.S. GOVERNMENT PLACES ON A JUST SOLUTION TO THIS CASE. HE IS ALSO ASTUTE ENOUGH TO UNDERSTAND THAT, SHOULD THIS INVESTIGATION STALL OR PROVE TO BE A DEAD END, THE ESAF'S REPUTATION WILL BE FURTHER SULLIED AND COULD EFFECTIVELY KILL ANY CHANCES OF THE ESAF RECEIVING U.S. MILITARY AID IN THE FUTURE. WHILE THE TIMING OF THE ANNOUNCEMENT MAY HAVE BEEN INFLUENCED BY THE MILITARY AID VOTE, [REDACTED] DOUBT IT WAS A PRIMARY MOTIVATING FACTOR.

4. THE POSSIBILITY EXISTS THAT PONCE AND THE EMCFA ARE ATTEMPTING TO FURTHER DELAY THE TRIAL BY INTRODUCING NEW AVENUES OF INVESTIGATION. AN INTEGRAL PART OF THIS THEORY IS INFORMATION THAT THE EMCFA MET WITH THE OFFICERS MENTIONED IN [REDACTED] AND BRIEFED THEM ON WHAT THEIR TESTIMONY WOULD BE. [REDACTED] NO EVIDENCE TO INDICATE THAT PONCE NOR SENIOR OFFICERS IN THE EMCFA MET WITH THE OFFICERS INVOLVED TO ORDER THEM TO TESTIFY TRUTHFULLY OR OTHERWISE. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] THE ESAF OFFICERS CALLED TO GIVE ADDITIONAL TESTIMONY EXPRESSED SURPRISE, ANGER, AND SOME CONFUSION, WHEN CALLED TO SUBMIT TO FURTHER QUESTIONING.

[REDACTED] THERE IS NO OUTWARD INDICATION THAT THE ESAF OFFICERS WERE COACHED ON WHAT TO SAY. IF PONCE AND THE EMCFA WANTED TO DELAY THIS CASE FROM GOING TO TRIAL, THEY HAVE SUCCEEDED. THE CASE IS NOW BOGGED DOWN IN THIS NEW LINE OF INVESTIGATION WHICH HAS YET TO DEVELOP ANY DAMAGING INFORMATION OF SIGNIFICANCE. TO THE CONTRARY, AND AS REPORTED IN PREVIOUS TRAFFIC, THERE IS THE POSSIBILITY THAT THIS NEW INVESTIGATION WILL ACTUALLY STRENGTHEN THE DEFENSE'S CASE; THERE IS NOW TESTIMONY, DEVELOPED IN THIS LATEST ROUND OF INVESTIGATION, THAT THERE WAS NO DISCUSSION OF THE JESUITS AT THE 15 NOVEMBER 1989 MEETING. THIS UNDERCUTS THE SINCE RETRACTED TESTIMONY THAT COLONEL GUILLERMO ((BENEVIDES)) ORDERED THE KILLINGS AT THIS SAME MEETING.

5. ANOTHER POSSIBLE MOTIVE FOR PONCE'S ACTIONS IS THAT PRESIDENT CRISTIANI IS PRESSURING THE ESAF TO BE MORE COOPERATIVE IN THE INVESTIGATION. THE REASONING BEHIND THIS THEORY IS THAT PONCE WOULD NOT HAVE EMBARKED ON THIS INITIATIVE ON HIS OWN; THE ESAF HAS NOT BEEN COOPERATIVE FOR THE PAST ONE AND A HALF YEARS, WHY WOULD IT COOPERATE NOW? PRESIDENT CRISTIANI IS BEING PRESSURED FROM ALL SIDES TO PROSECUTE THIS CASE AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE, AND THE ESAF'S UNCOOPERATIVE STANCE WOULD HAVE BEEN A LOGICAL PLACE FOR PRESIDENT CRISTIANI TO BEGIN HIS OWN PRESSURING. THIS THEORY IS ENTIRELY POSSIBLE, BUT THERE IS NO EVIDENCE TO DATE TO SUPPORT THIS THEORY.

6. YET ANOTHER POSSIBILITY IS THAT PONCE AND THE EMCFA ARE SINCERE IN WANTING TO RESOLVE THIS CASE, AND THIS INITIATIVE IS A DEMONSTRATION OF THIS NEW FOUND SINCERITY. THERE ARE FEW PEOPLE WHO WOULD SIGN ON TO THIS THEORY, ESPECIALLY GIVEN THE HISTORY OF THIS CASE. THERE IS PRECIOUS LITTLE EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT A CHANGE OF HEART ON THE PART OF THE ESAF AND PONCE IN PARTICULAR. IN FACT, CLOSE EXAMINATION OF THIS LATEST INITIATIVE REVEALS THAT PONCE AND THE EMCFA MAY NOT HAVE BEEN PROVIDING NEW LEADS AT ALL. THE FACT IS THAT PONCE ATTENDED THE 15 NOVEMBER 1989 MEETING AND IS FULLY AWARE OF THE PROCEEDINGS. HE IS, THEREFORE, FULLY AWARE THAT TESTIMONY WOULD PROVE THAT THERE WAS NO DISCUSSION OF THE JESUITS AT ALL (AS BORNE OUT BY SUBSEQUENT EVENTS). IT IS CONCEIVABLE THAT PONCE AND THE EMCFA WERE WELL AWARE OF THE OUTCOME OF THIS LINE OF INVESTIGATION BEFORE IT STARTED.

7. [REDACTED] THIS NEW INITIATIVE WILL NOT PROVIDE STARTLING NEW REVELATIONS ABOUT THE MURDER OF THE

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

JESUITS, NOR WILL IT MOVE THE CASE ANY CLOSER TO BEING
RESOLVED. THIS NEW INITIATIVE HAS SERVED TO DELAY THE CASE
FROM GOING TO TRIAL, MUDDIED THE ALREADY MURKY WATERS AND
GENERATED BOTH HOPE AND DESPAIR THAT A JUST SOLUTION WILL BE
FOUND. IT IS LOGICAL TO EXPECT THAT SUCH AN INITIATIVE FROM
THE MINISTER OF DEFENSE AND EMCFA WOULD SIGNAL TO THE ESAF THAT
PERHAPS THE HIGH COMMAND ACTUALLY WANTED THIS CASE TO BE
RESOLVED. IN FACT, THE SUBJECT OF THE JESUIT MURDERS IS NOT
DISCUSSED AMONG OFFICERS, PERHAPS OUT OF FEAR OF GUILT BY
ASSOCIATION OR SIMPLY BECAUSE THEY WANT IT TO GO AWAY. THE
UNFORTUNATE REALITY IS THAT UNTIL A WITNESS OR RELIABLE SOURCE
WITH ACCESS TO SIGNIFICANT INFORMATION ON THE AUTHORS OF THIS
CRIME ARE FOUND, THE CASE WILL BE STALLED. IF THE CASE GOES TO
COURT UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES IT IS NOT BEYOND THE REALM OF
POSSIBILITY THAT COLONEL BENEVIDES WILL BE EXONERATED AND THE
OTHERS WILL RECEIVE SENTENCES COMMENSURATE WITH THEIR
INVOLVEMENT.

-----TEAR LINE-----

[REDACTED]

TOR: 060022Z JUN 91

Case #

COUNTRY: EL SALVADOR

DOI: EARLY JUNE 1991

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[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

2. ^{SOURCE} SAID THE JESUITS HAVE INFORMATION WHICH PROVES VICE MINISTER OF DEFENSE GENERAL JUAN ORLANIXI ((ZEPEDA)) HAD PRIOR KNOWLEDGE OF THE PLAN TO KILL THE JESUITS, ALTHOUGH HE DID NOT PARTICIPATE IN FORMULATING THE PLAN. ^{SOURCE} ADDED THAT THE JESUITS ARE ALSO CONVINCED THAT THE THEN-COMMANDER OF THE ATACATL IMMEDIATE REACTION BATTALION, LIEUTENANT COLONEL OSCAR LEON ((LINARES)), WAS NOT INVOLVED IN EITHER THE PLANNING OF THE MURDERS OR THE ACTUAL KILLING OF THE JESUITS.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

11

[REDACTED]

FOUO 10/18/00 USE 91

101844Z JUL 9

101844Z JUL 9

3. FOLLOWING IS THE VERBATIM TEXT

"JUST A NOTE TO GO OVER THE VISIT. THINGS WENT WELL, AND WE ALL ENJOYED THEIR COMPANY. MOST OF OUR CONVERSATIONS WERE SMALL TALK AND SOCIAL IN NATURE, BUT A FEW TIDBITS DID COME UP AND

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] [REDACTED]
TOR: 101840Z 10L 91 [REDACTED]

HERE THEY ARE:

"1) THE KILLING OF THE PRIESTS WAS DECIDED ON DURING A MEETING AT ESTADO MAYOR THAT WENT FROM 1800 TO 2100 HRS. THE NIGHT BEFORE. IT IS WITH SADNESS THAT I MUST TELL YOU GEN. BUSTILLO WAS A PARTICIPANT ALONG WITH GEN. LARIOS, COLS. PONCE, ZEPEDA, RUBIO, BENAVIDES AND HELENA FUENTES (SIC) ALONG WITH SOME OF THEIR SUBORDINATES. ABOUT THE ONLY ONE WHO WASN'T THERE WAS COL. VARGAS. I BELIEVE HE WAS UP TO HIS INGENIOS (SIC--REFERENCE TO A RECENT JOKE) IN "G" ACTIVITY AND PERHAPS WOULD HAVE BEEN A DISSENTING VOICE ANYWAY. THERE WAS, IT SEEMS, A CIRCLE THE WAGONS MENTALITY (SIC) INVOLVED. ALONG WITH A LONG AND DEEP HATRED TOWARD U.C.A., PARTICULARLY IGNACIO ELLACURIA WHO WAS SUPPOSED TO BE ONE OF THE FMLN'S LEADING ADVISORS AND TACTICIANS. JON SOBRINO WAS ALSO A TARGET, BUT SOMEHOW THEY MISSED HIM. IT MIGHT BE PRUDENT FOR HIM TO LEAVE FOR A WHILE. EVEN NOW.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

1968 TO 1970 - SECTION COMMANDER WITH THE FIRST BRIGADE.

JANUARY 1968 - PROMOTED TO THE RANK OF SECOND LIEUTENANT

1970 TO 1971 - ATTENDED MILITARY BRANCH TRAINING AT
BRIGADE ARTILLERIA

1970 TO 1972 - SECTION COMMANDER OF 105 HOWITZER BATTERY
OF THE FIRST BRIGADE

AUGUST 1972 - PROMOTED TO THE RANK OF FIRST LIEUTENANT

1972-1976 - INSTRUCTOR OF THE FIRING BATTERY 105 HOWITZER
BATTERY

1976 - PROMOTED TO THE RANK OF CAPTAIN

1976 - SCHOLARSHIP STUDENT AT FORT STILL, OKLAHOMA

1976 TO 1980 - INSTRUCTOR OF TACTICS AND FIRING, BATTERY
SCHOOL

1980 TO 1981 - S-3 AT ARTILLERY BRIGADE

1981 - PROMOTED TO THE RANK OF MAJOR

1982 TO 1984 - SCHOLARSHIP STUDENT TO ARGENTINA

1984 - PROMOTED TO RANK OF LIEUTENANT COLONEL

1985 - DM4, THIRD BRIGADE, SAN FRANCISCO GOTERA (MORAZAN)

SEPTEMBER 1988 - STUDIED AT THE FBI ACADEMY

1988 TO JUNE 1989 - COMMANDER OF THE EXECUTIVE UNIT OF THE
SPECIAL INVESTIGATIVE UNIT (SIU)

JUNE 1989 TO FEBRUARY 1990 - HEAD OF THE C-1 OF THE JOINT
GENERAL STAFF

OCTOBER 1990 TO PRESENT - COMMANDER OF THE ENGINEER
DETACHMENT, DM-3 (DM'ING)

4. LOPEZ IS THE LEADER OF THE 1968 TANDA AND ACCORDING TO
THE DATT, ONE OF THE COUNTRY'S BEST OFFICERS. LOPEZ HAS BEEN
DESCRIBED IN VARIOUS DOD CABLES AS A COMMANDER WHO LIKES TO
PARTICIPATE WITH HIS OFFICERS IN ALL ACTIVITIES. LOPEZ

[REDACTED]

REPORTEDLY KEEPS HIS OFFICERS INFORMED ON ALL MATTERS PERTAINING TO OPERATIONS, TACTICS, AND OTHER ACTIVITIES, AND IS KNOWN AS AN AGGRESSIVE COMMANDER WHO PERSONALLY INVOLVED HIMSELF IN OPERATIONS AGAINST THE FMLN. LOPEZ, AS COMMANDER OF THE DM'ING HAS BEEN COMPLIMENTED FOR HIS EXCELLENT WORKING RELATIONSHIP WITH HIS TROOPS AND THE LOCAL POPULACE, AS WELL AS HIS LEADERSHIP AND ORGANIZATIONAL ABILITIES.

5. FROM THE LATE 1990'S TO THE PRESENT, ACCUSATIONS HAVE BEEN MADE THAT LOPEZ WAS INVOLVED IN THE COVER UP, OR INSTIGATION OF THE JESUIT MURDERS. SOME OF THESE ACCUSATIONS MAY BE DUE TO THE FACT THAT LOPEZ WAS ASSIGNED BY GENERAL RENE EMILIO ((PONCE)), THEN CHIEF OF STAFF AT THE ESTADO MAYOR, TO ASSIST THE SIU IN THE INVESTIGATION IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE JESUIT MURDERS. LOPEZ LATER LEFT THE SIU WHEN PRESIDENT CRISTIANI APPOINTED A MILITARY HONOR BOARD TO INVESTIGATE THE JESUIT MURDERS, ON 6 JANUARY 1990. ONLY A FEW REPORTS HAVE BEEN RECEIVED SPECIFICALLY MENTIONING LOPEZ, HOWEVER, THESE HAVE BEEN BRIEFLY OUTLINED BELOW.

6. LOPEZ TESTIFIED IN SEPTEMBER 1990 THAT DURING A 15 NOVEMBER 1989 MEETING AT THE ESTADO MAYOR, HE HAD NEVER INFORMED COLONEL CARLOS ARMANDO ((AVILES)) OF A CONVERSATION BETWEEN GUILLERMO ALFREDO ((BENAVIDES)) MORENO AND LT COL MANUEL ((RIVAS)) MEJIA, IN WHICH BENAVIDES ADMITTED HAVING ORDERED THE MURDER OF THE JESUITS. ACCORDING TO LOPEZ' TESTIMONY, HE HAD NO IDEA "DURING THAT PERIOD OF TIME" (NOVEMBER 1989) THAT BENAVIDES MAY HAVE BEEN INVOLVED IN THE MURDER.

7. LOPEZ' NAME WAS INCLUDED ON A LIST OF ESAF OFFICERS THAT THE FMLN BELIEVED WERE GUILTY OF COVERING UP THE JESUIT MURDER INVESTIGATION. JULY 1991 STATED THAT LOPEZ WAS ONE OF FOUR INDIVIDUALS IDENTIFIED BY THE LEGAL PROSECUTORS FOR THE SALVADORAN JESUIT ORDER AS INSTIGATING THE JESUIT MURDERS.

8. AS OF 1976, LOPEZ WAS MARRIED TO LILIAN ((SANTAMARIA)) DE LOPEZ, AND HAD ONE CHILD. ANA LOUISA ((LOPEZ)) SANTAMARIA, SUBJECT'S DAUGHTER, WAS BORN ON AUGUST 15 1974. SUBJECT STATED HE HAD ONE RELATIVE LIVING IN THE U.S., DR. RENE ((LOPEZ)) Y LOPEZ OF AUGUSTA, GEORGIA. LOPEZ IS SAID TO ENJOY BASKETBALL,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

SINGING, MUSIC, TV, AND DANCING.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

[REDACTED]

DIST: 12 JULY 1991

COUNTRY: EL SALVADOR

SUBJ: FOREIGN MINISTRY CONCERN OVER THE JESUIT CASE;
FOREIGN MINISTER'S BELIEF THAT A GUILTY VERDICT IS
IMPERATIVE

[REDACTED]

TEXT: 1. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] AS OF EARLY JULY 1991 OVERALL SALVADORAN FOREIGN RELATIONS HAVE IMPROVED SLIGHTLY; HOWEVER, THE JESUIT MURDER CASE REMAINS ONE OF THE MOST SERIOUS SALVADORAN FOREIGN POLICY PROBLEMS. THE LACK OF A RESOLUTION TO THE JESUIT CASE IS HINDERING FOREIGN MINISTRY (MFA) EFFORTS TO OBTAIN MORE DECISIVE INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC SUPPORT, PARTICULARLY WITH THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY.

2. DURING AN EARLY JULY MEETING WITH HIGH-LEVEL MFA OFFICIALS AND AMBASSADORS RECALLED FROM EUROPE, NORTH AMERICA, AND CENTRAL AMERICA, [REDACTED] EMPHASIZED THAT SALVADORAN AMBASSADORS MUST CONDUCT THEMSELVES IN SUCH A MANNER AS TO INCREASE THE CREDIBILITY OF THE SALVADORAN GOVERNMENT REGARDING THE RESOLUTION OF THE JESUIT CASE. THE AMBASSADORS MUST STRESS THAT THE SALVADORAN GOVERNMENT DESIRES JUSTICE IN THE CASE AND WILL PROSECUTE THOSE IMPLICATED IN THE CASE REGARDLESS OF THEIR RANK.

3. [REDACTED] CONCERN THAT IF A GUILTY VERDICT IS NOT REACHED, EVERYTHING FOR WHICH THE GOVERNMENT HAS WORKED IN ITS FOREIGN POLICY WOULD BE ENDANGERED AND COME TO NOTHING. THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY WOULD ISOLATE EL SALVADOR THROUGH BOYCOTTS OF

[REDACTED]

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4. [REDACTED] IT WAS "VITAL" THAT THE PEACE EFFORTS OF PRESIDENT ALFREDO ((CRISTIAN)) BE REWARDED AND SUPPORTED WHOLEHEARTEDLY BY THE SALVADORAN FOREIGN SERVICE ABROAD. [REDACTED] IT IS A "NATIONAL PRIORITY" THAT A GUILTY VERDICT BE REACHED IN THE JESUIT CASE.

260711Z OCT 91

2. MAJ. MIGUEL ((CASTILLO)) GONZALEZ, DPOB: 14 JAN 56, SAN SALVADOR, IN AUGUST 1990, ATTENDED THE SCHOOL OF AMERICAS AT FT. BENNING, GA.,

3. OF INTEREST IS FACT THAT LT. COL CARLOS CANILO ((HERNANDEZ)), DEPUTY COMMANDER AT THE SALVADORAN MILITARY SCHOOL, IDENTIFIED MAJOR CASTILLO GONZALEZ AS HAVING BEEN AT THE MILITARY SCHOOL THE NIGHT OF THE JESUIT MURDERS.

NO FURTHER INFORMATION OR FOLLOW UP TO THIS ALLEGATION.

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TOP SECRET NOV 91

041915Z NOV 91

- MIGUEL ((CASTILLO)) GONZALEZ

1. DURING A CONVERSATION IN EARLY SEPTEMBER 91, MAJ MIGUEL ((CASTILLO)) GONZALEZ TOLD [REDACTED] THAT HE HAD BEEN IDENTIFIED BY DEPUTY COMMANDER AT THE SALVADORAN MILITARY ACADEMY LTC CARLOS CAMILO ((HERNANDEZ)) AS HAVING BEEN AT THE SCHOOL THE NIGHT OF THE JESUIT MURDERS. WHAT LTC HERNANDEZ FAILED TO MENTION WAS THAT CASTILLO HAD ARRIVED THAT PARTICULAR NIGHT FOR HIS FIRST DAY OF ASSIGNMENT TO THE SCHOOL. ACCORDING TO CASTILLO, JUDGE ZAMORA, WHO PRESIDED OVER THE JUDICIAL INVESTIGATION OF THE JESUIT MURDERS AND THE PANEL OF JUDGES WORKING ON THE CASE, DISMISSED WITHOUT RESERVATION THE ACCUSATIONS OF HIS PARTICIPATION OR PREVIOUS KNOWLEDGE OF THE CRIME. CASTILLO REMAINS UPSET WITH THE ESAF HIGH COMMAND FOR HAVING IMPLICATED HIM IN THIS SENSITIVE CASE WITHOUT PROOF OF COMPLICITY.

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NOV 19 1961

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

END

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SUBJECT: [REDACTED] FRANCIS A. MURAN

TEXT:

FOR

FEAR LINE

B. IN AUGUST 1981 COMMANDER 1ST BDE, COLONEL ADOLFO (BLANDON), HAD LEARNED THAT COLONEL MORAN, CHIEF OF TREASURY POLICE AND DIRECTOR OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMISSION OF THE LEMPA RIVER HYDROELECTRIC PROJECT (CEL), WAS PLOTTING AGAINST BLANDON'S LIFE AND AGAINST COLONEL IDAN RAFAEL (BUSILLIO), SALVADORAN AIR FORCE COMMANDER. MORAN WAS A CLOSE FRIEND OF FORMER DEFENSE MINISTER GENERAL JOSE GUILLERMO (GARCIA) AND APPARENTLY RESENTED BLANDON'S WELL KNOWN ROLE IN BRINGING ABOUT GARCIA'S REPLACEMENT.

4. IN NOVEMBER 1983 MORAN WAS IDENTIFIED AS ALLEGEDLY INVOLVED IN VARIOUS RIGHTWING TERROR ACTIVITIES, AND HIS NAME WAS PLACED ON THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE WATCHLIST.

E. IN EARLY APRIL 1983 MORAN WAS ALLEGEDLY ORDERED BY MINISTER OF DEFENSE GENERAL GARCIA THE RESPONSIBILITY OF ABDUCTING PATRICIA (MARTINO), SECRETARY AND MEMBER OF NATIONALIST REPUBLICAN ALLIANCE (ARENA).

FEAR LINE

A. [REDACTED] IN MAY 1985 MORAN, HEAD OF CEL, WAS REPORTEDLY VERY ACTIVE IN DEATH SQUAD ACTIVITIES AND HAD RECRUITED TWO LEFTIST GUERRILLAS TO COMMIT ASSASSINATIONS AND OTHER TERRORIST ACTS. MORAN DID NOT MEET DIRECTLY WITH THE TWO GUERRILLAS BUT THROUGH AN INTERMEDIARY. WITH THE NATURAL COVER AS LEFTIST GUERRILLAS, THE RIGHT HAD LITTLE TO WORRY ABOUT IF THE GUERRILLAS WERE CAPTURED OR KILLED WHILE CARRYING OUT ACTS THAT EITHER DESTABILIZED THE ELECTED GOVERNMENT OR ELIMINATED ENEMIES. [REDACTED]

IN 2086503
SALE 34269

072025Z SEP 83

SUBJECT: BRIEFING OF CONGRESSMEN ZSCHAU AND KUSTMAYER AND STAFFS

2. LATTER PART OF BRIEFING, HOWEVER, TURNED UNPLEASANT WITH HOSTILE AND LEADING QUESTIONS FROM KOSTMAYER TO SURFACE MILITARY CIVIL RIGHTS ABUSES AND PARTICIPATION IN DEATH SQUAD ACTIVITY AND INCIDENCE OF MILITARY CORRUPTION. COS SAID LAS HOJAS CASE WAS UNRELATED TO INSURGENT BUT LACK OF ANY PROSECUTION IN CASE LEAVES MILITARY OPEN TO CRITICISM. COS SAID THAT THERE IS NO CURRENT "INSTITUTIONALIZATION" OF MILITARY CIVIL RIGHTS ABUSES ALTHOUGH IT IS WELL KNOWN THAT THERE ARE RIGHT WING SYMPATHIZERS IN MILITARY.

4. QUESTIONING THEN TOOK UNCOMFORTABLE TURN TO [STATION] REPORTING ON "DEATH SQUADS". AT THIS POINT COS SAID THIS WAS SUBJECT WHICH CONGRESSMAN SHOULD TAKE UP IN WASHINGTON BECAUSE OF SENSITIVITY OF THIS INFORMATION. KOSTMAYER INDICATED THAT HE WILL FOLLOW [COS] RECOMMENDATION.

SECRET

Approved for Release

NOV 1993

final 4-5-83
DRAFT

[REDACTED]

Dear Mr. Hamilton:

The allegations in the articles which you cite in your letter of 25 March contain numerous inaccuracies. To set the record straight, I offer the following comments:

Several charges concerning Ricardo Lau appear to be unfounded. First, neither the Agency nor the Honduran Government has any information which would substantiate the claim that Ricardo Lau committed human rights abuses in Honduras. He was accused of killing two Honduran leftists in June 1981, but when Honduran authorities investigated this matter, they found that Lau was not in Honduras at the time of the murders. Second, interviews with [REDACTED] assets reveal that Lau was neither connected with D'Aubuisson nor with Guatemalan/Salvadoran right-wing extremists. Moreover, we have no evidence to suggest that Lau played any role in the murder of Archbishop Romero. Third, [REDACTED] never mediated any dispute involving death threats against Lau, and we are not aware of any FDN plot to assassinate him. It is true that Lau formerly served as chief of FDN counterintelligence. Additionally, the Agency encouraged the FDN leadership to remove Lau in order to rid that organization of its Somoza taint and because of previous rumors of unacceptable conduct by Lau while serving the Somoza government.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Finally, the Agency has no information to support the assertion that the decision to murder Archbishop Romero was made by a group of Miami-based Salvadorans. Although a variety of sources have accused Roberto D'Aubuisson of complicity in the murder, the Agency does not have any information which could be construed as hard proof.

Approved for Release
NOV 1993

[REDACTED]

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12 April 1993

D R A F T

Letter to The Editor
The New York Times
229 W. 43rd Street
New York, NY 10036

To the Editor:

On April 2, you ran an article by Anthony Lewis ("Fear of the Truth"). In the body of that piece, Lewis stated that CIA knew who had killed San Salvador's Archbishop Romero. Lewis stated categorically that at the direction of Robert Gates, the information had been withheld from our intelligence oversight committees.

Lewis is categorically wrong.

Over the years, US intelligence has contributed substantially to our governments' understanding of human rights violations in El Salvador and elsewhere. In the Romero matter, we can document that when we acquired information about the assassination and the alleged assassin, we promptly sent it to appropriate policy agencies, to two other US intelligence agencies, and to both of our Congressional oversight committees.

It is important that the US public understand that neither the CIA nor Robert Gates suppressed information about this matter.

Sincerely,

Gary E. Foster

Approved for Release
NOV 1993



EMPLOYEE BULLETIN

EB No. 1173

12 October 1984

SSCI REPORT ON POLITICAL VIOLENCE IN EL SALVADOR

1. In response to charges in THE NEW YORK TIMES and THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR that the U.S. Government and specifically the CIA were involved with death squad activity in El Salvador, the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence some months ago began an extensive study of the activities and information held by the CIA, the Departments of State, Justice, and Defense, the U.S. Southern Command (SOUTHCOM), and NSA relating to political violence in El Salvador. The Office of Public Affairs has repeatedly denied these allegations to the media and the Office of Legislative Liaison and appropriate Agency components have assisted the SSCI in its investigation.

2. The unclassified version of the study released to the public this week reports that there is no evidence to support the allegations of U.S. Government involvement with the recent political violence in El Salvador, especially violence perpetrated by extreme rightwing death squads. For the information of all employees, the text of the Committee's general conclusions follows:

"The Committee found ample evidence that the policy of the United States throughout the period under review was consistently to oppose political violence in El Salvador, including violence by extreme rightwing death squads. The degree to which Executive branch agencies acted directly with Salvadoran authorities to combat political violence generally reflected their judgments about what was achievable in the Salvadoran political context.

"The Committee found that, in the course of carrying out their missions implementing overall U.S. policy to assist the Government of El Salvador in resisting the leftist insurgency, elements of the U.S. government have unavoidably had contact with Salvadoran organizations and individuals strongly suspected of being involved in or associated with political violence. The Committee believes that, for the most part, the problems that have arisen in this regard are of the type which may occur whenever the U.S. government seeks to obtain intelligence on the activities of clandestine organizations such as international terrorist groups or narcotics rings, or to assist foreign governments engaged in violent confrontations with subversive forces.

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1. National Guard personnel seized Francisco Araulfo Ventura and Jose Humberto Mejia, detained them in the parking lot of the United States Embassy, and then turned them over to a Colombian military plane, who took them to a military prison.

1. What benefits do people get from living in a city? What are the costs? Do you think that the benefits outweigh the costs? Why or why not? Do you think that people should live in a city? Why or why not? Do you think that people should live in a city? Why or why not?

There is a large number of people who are interested in the study of the history of the United States. The study of the history of the United States is a very important part of the study of the history of the world. The study of the history of the United States is a very important part of the study of the history of the world. The study of the history of the United States is a very important part of the study of the history of the world.

At the request of the AGEUS, Dr. Santiago Ordellana Amador and attorney Florentin Melendez were

It is also known that different types of neurons are found in different regions of the brain. For example, the *Thal* gene is expressed in the thalamus, while the *Cereb* gene is expressed in the cerebral cortex. This suggests that these genes play a role in the development of these specific brain regions. The expression of these genes is regulated by various factors, including transcription factors and signaling molecules. Understanding the role of these genes in brain development is crucial for identifying the genetic basis of neurological disorders.

[illegible]

Conclusions

The Commission concludes the following:

1. There is full proof that agents of the National Guard seized Francisco Arnulfo Ventura and Jose Humberto Mejia, held them in the parking lot of the United States Embassy and turned them over to men in civilian clothes who took them away in a private car.
2. While in the hands of these individuals who arrived at the Embassy parking lot by automobile and had the students handed over to them by the guardsmen who had seized them, Ventura and Mejia disappeared. There is no evidence that they are still alive.

It is the Commission's conclusion that the actions of the National Guard and the individuals who took the students away from the Embassy parking lot were a direct result of the actions of the National Guard and the individuals who took the students away from the Embassy parking lot.

The Commission is of the opinion that the actions of the National Guard and the individuals who took the students away from the Embassy parking lot were a direct result of the actions of the National Guard and the individuals who took the students away from the Embassy parking lot.

El Salvador: Controlling Rightwing Terrorism

Introduction

Politically motivated civilian killings in El Salvador fell sharply in 1984 as the government took action on a variety of fronts to rein in death squads. That reduction, in conjunction with significant political and military developments, has aided democracy and the promise of an eventual resolution of the civil war. Recent death threats against President Duarte and other government officials over the issue of dialogue with the insurgent left, however, have underscored the truculence of powerful rightwing terrorist groups that in the past acted with virtual impunity. Some recent events, such as rumors of impeachment maneuvers against Duarte in the Assembly and coup plotting within the military, suggest that the President may be approaching the limits of his ability to contain extremist violence. Moreover, the press of political, military, and socioeconomic issues may make Duarte's task even more difficult over the coming year.

This assessment is a descriptive and analytic overview of the structure and goals of the Salvadoran extreme right and its terrorist capabilities. It reviews those factors that have contributed to a reduction in rightist terrorism, examines prospects for resurgent violence, and outlines the implications for US policy.

Legacy of Violence

Violence is part of the cultural history of El Salvador, just as it is in neighboring countries. Salvadorans are at once intensely nationalistic and community oriented, while also being fierce champions of personal gain. Highly ingrained in the national psyche are the interlocking values of ownership of property, loyalty to family and friends, and pride of the individual. The historical record shows that retribution can be swift against those who challenge such principles, and the practice of violent vendetta traditionally has been common among all socioeconomic classes and along

the entire political spectrum. Even during the comparatively peaceful and prosperous years of the late 1960s and early 1970s, the relative level of common domestic violence—resulting from property feuds, spontaneous duels, and crimes of passion—was among the highest in the world, according to international statistical references. By the mid-1970s, homicide was the third leading cause of death in the country.

Political violence, similarly, has occurred for generations. We believe that, before the Marxist insurgency in 1979, such violence largely reflected the various military regimes' efforts to neutralize what were perceived to be subversive elements. During the past five years of insurgent war and transition toward democracy, the public record shows that thousands of noncombatants have disappeared or have been killed by unidentified persons and vaguely identified groups. President Duarte has publicly placed the death toll at over 40,000 and has primarily blamed rightwing death squads. We agree that a large but unknowable percentage of the political violence in recent years has been carried out by rightwing civilian and military extremists.

Statistics on civilian political deaths indicate that there have been just over 18,000 killings confirmed by civil authorities and the local media since January 1981. Many thousands more, especially, were killed during 1980, before records were systematically maintained. Unsubstantiated totals—

often range from 40,000 to as high as 60,000. In some investigations, part of this discrepancy is due to police-oriented clerical and human rights groups that have counted guerrilla battle casualties as civilian political killings attributable to the right wing. The insurgent left has contributed significantly to the total by carrying out over the past five years several thousand assassinations (justified executions). Guerrilla targets have included government personnel, supporters, and their families, as reflected in

Evolution of the Extreme Right

Rightwing political violence had its genesis in El Salvador's late-19th-century conversion from mercantilism to capitalism. At that time the government confiscated peasant farmers' subsistence holdings and turned them over to large coffee growers in order to develop an agricultural export system. A semifeudal, social-Darwinian system soon evolved around landless wage-earning laborers, a tiny managerial aristocracy, and a constabulary army to maintain order.

By December 1931, however, the world depression had gutted the economy, and a newly elected civilian government was threatened by growing unrest. The Army staged a coup and established a military dictatorship. A month later, impoverished Indian laborers seeking return of their lands launched a small uprising in the western provinces. According to a variety of academic sources, the rebellion was fomented in part by Communist Party militants who were attempting to integrate rural workers with the fledgling socialist trade union movement in the capital. Fearing a widespread conspiracy, the Army and the civilian elites reacted by massacring as many as 30,000 peasants in a few weeks.

The resulting endemic national paranoia over the Communist threat reinforced authoritarian rule by the armed forces and its affluent civilian backers for the next half century. The chain of military regimes provided order and stability, and largely gave the plantation owners and monopolist businessmen a free hand over the economy. Combining with favorable international economic trends and foreign aid, this system of rule resulted in substantial material progress for the upper and middle classes, and development of a strong physical and institutional economic base. Given these historical roots, order and stability

also became closely identified with institutionalized violence against dissident leftist elements, as well as intimidation of the rural peasant and urban labor classes.

Control over society was handled by the military government and civilian elites largely through paramilitary constabulary forces, regular Army units, and numerous official and private vigilante organizations. The historical record shows that, given the inherent weaknesses of the formal judicial process, these security bodies would often function at the local level as judge, jury, and executioner of individuals perceived to be criminals or subversives.

The Sandinista victory in Nicaragua in July 1979 shocked Salvadoran military leaders and provided the catalyst for a reformist coup in October, as

Convinced that dramatic political, social, and economic changes were needed to deter a popular insurrection among the urban and rural poor during a period of economic downturn and leftist unrest, the new armed forces leadership formed a civil-military junta with the moderate Christian Democrats that was committed to democratic elections and socio-economic reforms.

perhaps 30 percent of the entire officer corps was subsequently purged, which, in part, had the effect of neutralizing many corrupt senior officers and their subordinates who had long ago been co-opted by rightist civilian elites. With the Army backing reform, the political and economic power of the oligarchy was quickly reduced, with many of its key members liquidating assets and opting for self-imposed exile in Guatemala and the United States.

Structure and Operations of the Extreme Right

In our view, the violent attitudes and actions of the extreme right represent much more than just the conservative political spectrum. We believe that the extreme right is distinguishable from the mainstream right wing by two basic characteristics:

- Absolute intolerance of any element that has contributed to change in the pre-1979 status quo.
- Willingness to confront that change with active subversion of the constitutional system and with violent terrorism.

In our view, the extreme right does not predominate in any one social, economic, or political sector. Rather, it is a fanatic fringe drawn from all elements of society.

Indeed, despite a relative neutralization of the old order by the 1979 coup, we judge that El Salvador remains a decidedly conservative society, with rightist political tendencies running deep in the military, the private sector, and the general public. This was illustrated in the 6 May 1984 presidential election, which gave only a narrow margin of victory to Napoleon Duarte. Nearly half of the vote—in the largest and most honest election in the nation's history—went to the extreme rightist candidate, Roberto D'Aubuisson. Despite repeated public allegations of his terrorist links, D'Aubuisson won 10 of 14 departments and a majority of the rural vote over the progressive Duarte. This suggests that many Salvadorans perceived D'Aubuisson as representing a no-nonsense conservatism that would lead itself to reestablishing law and order and eradicating the insurgency.

Furthermore, in the absence of an effective criminal justice system and, until recently, an Army capable of containing the insurgency, the extreme right has been fighting what it considers a legitimate clandestine war against the left. Rightwing extremists have viewed government reformers as national security threats equal to those posed by the guerrilla movement. Hence, rightwing violence—as reflected in overall levels of civilian political deaths—has generally increased as insurgent operations have escalated, when the battlefield performance of the armed forces has diminished, or when political and economic issues have been intensely debated in the Legislative Assembly.

The Public View of Rightwing Terrorism

The phenomenon of rightist violence, while publicly denounced by the leaders of virtually all sectors of Salvadoran society, evokes mixed feelings among average citizens in private discussion. While some talk about "death squads" only in hushed tones, others express detachment and even gallows humor over the disappearance or assassination of individuals. Occasionally, some will claim to have close friends on the right who allegedly engage in violence or who have personal knowledge of specific terrorist activities. Conversely, others choose to believe that rightwing terrorist groups do not exist.

These contrasting attitudes are evident throughout society and reflect a great ambivalence about the national role played by rightwing terrorists. Many Salvadorans, of all economic classes, believe that, however repugnant the methods used by rightist vigilantes, their impact on Marxist subversion has been largely positive. Such people applaud government efforts to professionalize the armed forces and crack down on official corruption and abuses. At the same time, however, they denounce the US "obsession" with human rights and rationalize the need to fight leftwing terrorism with "whatever means are necessary." Often cited in such arguments is the official treatment meted out during the 1970s to the Tupamaros in Uruguay, the Montoneros in Argentina, and the MIR in Chile, as examples of extraordinary measures sometimes needed to save a society from chaos.

Against this backdrop, local criminals probably can continue to operate as mercenaries for hire to settle personal scores or fill the ranks of ad hoc death squads for fanatic rightists. Such an environment, moreover, will continue to make it difficult for San Salvador to investigate, prosecute, and convict local security force personnel who may still feel compelled to act on their own against suspected insurgents and their sympathizers.

The rightwing extremist minorities of the various social sectors often wield enough power to influence events in ways disproportionate to their numbers. Important members of large agricultural, industrial, and commercial organizations are well-known rightwing zealots. [redacted] indicate, for example, that a number of wealthy Salvadoran expatriates living in Miami have lent both overt and covert financial and organizational support to paramilitary groups associated with coffee exporter Orlando De Sola and others. Money and personal connections in El Salvador permit such individuals to aid or even participate in illegal activities in that country with relative freedom from prosecution because of their ability to bribe and intimidate Salvadoran Government and military officials. Accountability for extremist activities is constrained further because most of the Salvadoran media are privately owned by archconservatives, whose editorial policies include fierce criticism of even moderate government programs and praise for the hardline positions of the far right. [redacted]

[redacted] that some civilians are "untouchable," moreover, because of the power they wield through control of death squads. [redacted]

D'Aubuisson and ARENA

The creation of rightwing political parties over the years also has served the interests of the extremist minority in El Salvador. The most powerful of these groupings is the Nationalist Republican Alliance (ARENA). Founded in 1981 by Roberto D'Aubuisson—a former Army intelligence officer who was cashiered by the military following the 1979 coup—ARENA has evolved into the second-largest political party after the ruling Christian Democrats. [redacted] election results show that it commands enthusiastic support from a broad spectrum of society and, as a multifaceted organization with important contacts among foreign governments and groups, it has helped legitimize extremist calls for retrenchment on reforms and eradication of the insurgent left through more radical use of force. [redacted]

[redacted] behind ARENA's legitimate exterior lies a terrorist network led by D'Aubuisson henchmen and funded by wealthy Salvadoran expatriates residing in Guatemala and the United States. [redacted]



ARENA party leader Roberto D'Aubuisson campaigning with his then wife Yolanda Munoz for the 1982 Assembly elections. [redacted]

[redacted] strongly implicates D'Aubuisson loyalists in the 1981 murder of two US labor advisers. Public confessions by the two National Guard triggermen and reports by eyewitnesses have connected various civilian and military associates of D'Aubuisson to the crime. A pro-ARENA Supreme Court judge has been successful in using legal maneuvers and personal influence to free Army Capt. Eduardo Avila from prosecution for the crime. [redacted]

[redacted] that D'Aubuisson personally arranged for lower courts to drop charges against Lt. Isidro Lopez Sibrian, another junior officer implicated in the murder. [redacted]

In 1983, D'Aubuisson confided [redacted] plans by security force personnel to eliminate suspected leftists. He claimed that safeguarding human rights

[REDACTED]

was impossible in an insurgent war and advocated "extraofficial" operations to combat the enemy. Since that time, [REDACTED] have indicated that ARENA's terrorist components—directly managed by some of D'Aubuisson's closest advisers—remain intact and are preparing for future operations against the left, government officials, foreign journalists, and diplomatic personnel. [REDACTED]

ARENA's clandestine activities appear to be largely the responsibility of party security chief Dr. Hector Regalado. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] that Regalado was recruiting former policemen for work in death squads. [REDACTED] said that Regalado had commissioned triggermen to eliminate key leaders of the Popular Democratic Unity (UPD), a large labor coalition that has joined the Christian Democratic government to administer agrarian reform programs. [REDACTED]

ARENA has cast its net wide in identifying the threat from the "left." Following President Duarte's election in May 1984, [redacted]

[redacted] indicated that the party's security apparatus also was targeting members of the Christian Democratic Party for assassination. Former National Police personnel [redacted]

[redacted] were to be paid [redacted] for their participation in this special project. [redacted]

[redacted] that ARENA elements were establishing a base of operations [redacted] for the purpose of organizing armed resistance against the Duarte government. The group seeks to conduct terrorist operations against the Christian Democratic Party and the US Embassy in San Salvador. [redacted] that ARENA leaders and other extreme rightists have decided on this course because they fear that the Duarte administration might launch investigations against suspected terrorists and thus interrupt their domestic activities. [redacted]

[redacted] prepare for possible assassination attempts against President Duarte and other Christian Democratic leaders. [redacted]

These and other operations are often planned and implemented by individuals working out of safehouses belonging to known rightist civilian or military officials. [redacted]

[redacted] a wealthy ARENA party member and close personal friend of D'Aubuisson owns a home that is used as a base for terrorist operations and to store weapons and ammunition. The house, [redacted]

[redacted] is said [redacted] to be used by members of the Secret Anti-Communist Army (ESCA), a rightwing terrorist group that [redacted] indicates has been ARENA's primary instrument for clandestine operations over the past three years. [redacted]

[redacted] the ESCA has occupied a second house [redacted]

[redacted] where a large cache of dynamite, time fuses, and blasting caps also is hidden. [redacted]

Rural Vigilantes

Violence linked to ARENA is only one manifestation of rightwing terrorism in El Salvador. To eliminate challenges to its power, the extreme right traditionally has used civilian vigilante organizations, elements of the armed forces, and death squads led by ideologues and mercenaries. [redacted]

In the 1960s and 1970s, a surge of political activity among left-of-center opposition parties, peasants, urban workers, and student groups inspired the creation of several official and clandestine rightwing organizations, both ad hoc and permanent. The National Democratic Organization (ORDEN), for example, was a government-sponsored civic group formed in 1966 and comprising tens of thousands of conservative peasants, many of them former Army enlisted personnel who were part of the nation's inactive reserve force. [redacted] Until its official dissolution in 1979, ORDEN served both as an intelligence-gathering body and instrument of enforcement against real or suspected enemies of the regime. [redacted]

Although [redacted] suggests that such government-directed groups have been inactive for several years, vigilante violence—albeit declining—[redacted] has continued in the countryside. [redacted]

ORDEN's structure gradually has remained intact, with many of its former members having joined the Territorial Service and Civil Defense Forces—Army-run militias that provide local security in outlying villages and tactical intelligence to the military. We believe these militias too often function without official authorization as peasant vigilantes. The abduction in late 1983 of nine agrarian reform workers from the town of San Pedro Masahuat in La Paz Department, and their subsequent torture and murder in the Zaragoza hamlet of La Libertad Department, was attributed [redacted] to local Civil Defense personnel. So, too, was the 1983 massacre of peasant farmers in the La Florida hamlet of Santa Ana Department and killings of Christian Democratic party members in the jurisdictions of El Paisal and Aguilar in San Salvador Department. [redacted]

More recently in San Salvador Department, in the town of Nejapa, Civil Defense personnel have been engaging in abuses against peasant farmers affiliated with one of the larger democratic labor unions.

that Civil Defense personnel were being employed by their local commander as a "death squad." that the local commander was being assisted by elements within the regular armed forces and is responsible for the deaths of 11 people in the immediate area, including two children. Labor officials have delivered a protest note to the military high command in San Salvador.

In addition, the government's Human Rights Commission is investigating a case involving the murders of some 30 local peasants near the town of Armenia in Sonsonate Department. During 1981 and 1982, Civil Defense personnel from the Armenia jurisdiction abducted neighbors suspected of subversion and, after brutally killing them, threw their bodies into a deep well. Four vigilantes have been arrested in this case, and one has confessed to the crimes.

Rural vigilantism is augmented in the towns and cities by civilian mercenaries and fanatics allied with specific individuals or groups who routinely have waged their own vendettas against suspected subversives and political enemies. For example,

was hired by rightwing paramilitary organizer and ARENA loyalist Mario Radecki as a "hit man" in unspecified operations. Rightist terrorist cells also use both active-duty and retired military personnel in their campaigns, in the security forces.

Armed Forces Death Squads

In addition to ARENA and rural vigilantes, the military has also been responsible for a share of rightwing violence in El Salvador. Despite the now relatively moderate character of the military high command, the armed forces' staff and field commands are largely controlled by a younger generation of ambitious officers who have proved themselves to be among the best trained and motivated in a talent-deficient officer corps.

Unfortunately for the Duarte administration, many of these officers are former academy classmates and military colleagues of D'Aubuisson who share his ultrarightist views. Although they generally have abided by the moderate doctrine of their superiors in San Salvador, several,

are alleged to have associations with rightwing terrorist organizations and, in some cases, to have been leaders of death squads within the Army and the security forces.

death squads in the armed forces operate out of both urban military headquarters and rural outposts. They are led by senior enlisted personnel and junior officers, and they may function with or without the knowledge of immediate superiors. In 1983, for example, at least 20 and perhaps as many as 75 members of an Indian agrarian reform cooperative in the Las Hojas hamlet of Sonsonate Department were abducted and later executed by regular troops of the 6th Detachment.

indicates that some military officers in Sonsonate were influenced by disgruntled landowners to take action against the Indians. Neither the leader of the operation, Capt. Salvador Figueroa Morales, nor his commanding officer, Lt. Col. Elmer Gonzalez Arcejo, have been disciplined by their superiors. Indeed,

implicated both Gonzalez and Figueroa in a plot to assassinate Julio Ray Pruden, Minister of the Presidency and a top Christian Democratic leader.

The November murder of a Lutheran minister in San Miguel Department illustrates that some actions are committed by regular military personnel without supervision. Spokesmen for the armed forces have announced publicly that two Army enlisted men from the 3rd Brigade confessed to killing the minister on a whim, apparently assuming he had links to insurgents in the area.

Rightwing terrorists have been accustomed to operating with wide latitude, and it is almost certain that some Army and security force personnel continue to

Two young girls become victims of a Salvadoran hit-and-run death squad. Their alleged offenses and the name of the group that killed them are probably inscribed on the pieces of paper attached to their wrist-bound thumbs.



cooperates with and participates in death squad activities.

has indicated that the National Guard, National Police, and Treasury Police have all harbored terrorist elements within their ranks. In addition to the 6th Detachment in Sonsonate, other regular military units implicated,

in abductions and death squad activities include components of the Army Signal Corps, the Air Force, and the 1st Brigade, all three located in San Salvador; the Cavalry Regiment in San Andres; the Artillery Brigade in San Juan Opico; the Engineers Center in Zacatecoluca; the former 4th Infantry Detachment in Usulután; and the 2nd Brigade in Santa Ana. That several of these are key units with strong political sway within the military institution underscores the difficulty facing the high command in its efforts to improve the human rights record of the armed forces.

Scope and Method of Operation

While we are certain of the broad sponsorship for rightwing terrorism by ARENA, rural vigilantes, and elements of the military, the precise scope and operations of terrorist groups is more difficult to assess. The methods used by the extreme right—such as interrogating or killing victims far from where they were abducted—suggest a nationwide capability within at least some of the clandestine organizations. Compartmentation, a rigid code of secrecy, and the shifting whims of extremist leaders make estimating the numbers of terrorist organizations and their members difficult. The geographic breadth and frequent simultaneity of rightist operations—

suggest to us that as many as a dozen hit squads may exist in El Salvador during any given

period of time. It is our judgment that most are nameless and largely ad hoc groups, keyed to specific missions in local areas. Some appear more permanently organized, however, and wider ranging. Perhaps the most notorious of these is the Maximiliano Hernandez Martinez Anti-Communist Brigade, named for the military dictator who carried out the 1932 peasant massacre. This group has operated for several years, frequently publicizing its abductions and executions of leftist student and labor leaders with notes attached to bodies, newspaper advertisements, and radiobroadcasts.

indicates that such groups occasionally coordinate their activities with the security forces, and in some cases specific missions and personnel probably overlap different organizations. Perhaps the most outrageous instance of this occurred in November 1980, when masked gunmen abducted leftist political leaders during a news conference held in a Jesuit school near the US Embassy. Security for the affair was provided by a large number of uniformed National Police personnel, yet the abduction of six top leftists occurred in broad daylight without any interference from the authorities. The victims' mutilated bodies were found the following morning a few miles from the capital.

has indicated apparent working relationships among such clandestine terrorist organizations as the Secret Anti-Communist Army (ESA), the National Salvation Movement (MS-28), and the Salvadorean Anti-Communist Commandos (CAS). South moreover, believes that the Martinez Brigade and the ESA have a common leadership whose ultimate loyalties are to D'Aubuisson and his financial backers in Miami.

Constraints on Rightwing Violence

Although the various rightwing terrorist groups remain active and appear organizationally intact, they are being utilized with far less frequency than in past years. Indeed, the level of rightist terrorism in 1984 was surprisingly low, given the stakes involved in the presidential elections, expectations of summer and fall

guerrilla offensives, and rule by the moderate Christian Democrats. New policies by the government and the military high command designed to present terrorists with a less hospitable climate have probably given pause to some extreme rightist elements.

Changes in the Military

Following [redacted] visit to El Salvador [redacted] number of [redacted] a new willingness among senior military officers to attempt to control rank-and-file extremists. [redacted] indicated that the high command would accept some US demands—such as transferring certain unsavory officers out of the country—because the armed forces badly needed US aid. Several Army and security force officers have since been sent overseas to diplomatic posts. [redacted] that Defense Minister Vidar warned that ARENA security advisers—assigned by D'Aubuisson to manage security at the Legislative Assembly—that if they remained in El Salvador they would be investigated for their involvement in terrorist activities. One of these advisers, Dr. Hector Regalado, later told [redacted] that he resigned his public position as chief of security to avoid tarnishing ARENA's image during the spring election campaign.

These actions came in the wake of arrests by the National Police of three other D'Aubuisson security operatives on kidnapping charges. Moreover, [redacted], the National Police were responsible for anonymous telephone calls to civilians suspected of involvement with rightwing death squads. The callers threatened them with prosecution if they did not leave the country. The National Police at that time also arrested Army Capt. Eduardo Avila, implicated in the 1981 murder of two US labor advisers. Legal maneuvers by extreme rightist supporters, however, soon secured Avila's freedom, and all serious charges against him were dropped.

[redacted] the Defense Ministry believed there was growing willingness within the officer corps to investigate extremist elements.

The calling card of the Mano Blanca (white hand) rightwing death squad appears on the door of a schoolhouse where assassinated members of a leftwing teacher's union were employed.



Notices were placed in the local media announcing a campaign by the armed forces against the "death squads," and calling for help from the public and the justice system in identification and prosecution of the squads' members. One such notice was signed by most of the armed forces' staff and field commanders. In addition, the Ministry set up an ad hoc military commission at the beginning of 1984 to investigate reports of criminal activities and human rights abuses within the armed forces.

Throughout 1984, moreover, the Defense Ministry—under orders from President Duarte—moved to exert greater control over the three security forces.

Political moderates were placed in charge of the National Police and Treasury Police, with the latter having undergone a major personnel reorganization that transferred or discharged some 110 officers and enlisted men from its notorious intelligence and investigations section. Colonel Lopez Nalla—staunchly critical of rightist violence—was appointed Vice Minister of Defense in charge of public security. This new position was created to better coordinate and control the activities of the two police organizations and the National Guard.

The present military leadership continues to recognize that US aid levels and the effective prosecution of the war rest in part on the Salvadoran armed forces' human rights performance.

As a result, such actions as the telephone warnings to civilians suspected of involvement with the death squads and a reiteration of strict guidelines for armed forces conduct are likely to continue. In our judgment, the close relationship between key military officers and extreme rightist civilian politicians—as indicated by

incipient coup plotting during the New Year holidays—provides an effective conduit for the military to constrain extreme rightist actions.

Revamping the Justice System

Despite their preoccupation with establishing the credibility of the political process while escalating the war effort, both the provisional coalition government of President Magana and the successor Duarte administration pushed through judicial measures aimed at controlling the terrorist element. Early in 1984, a

Rightwing Terrorist Organizations

Salvadoran Anti-Communist Command (CAS)
Created in late 1983. Largely engaged in propaganda. Publicly denounced Defense Ministry for imposing human rights doctrine on the security forces. [redacted] believes the group may only be front for other clandestine organizations. [redacted]

Death Squadron (EM)
May not be an organized group but rather a generic label used loosely by ad hoc hit squads probably operating out of military posts. Trademark since at least 1979 has been initials EM carved into bodies of victims. [redacted]

Secret Anti-Communist Army (ESA)
One of the most active groups in recent years. Believed by some [redacted] to have been formed in mid-1980 by elements that since have been integrated into ARENA's paramilitary structure. [redacted]

White Hand (MB)
Like the EM and other nameless groups, a probable ad hoc name for terrorists working out of the Army and security forces. Trademark traditionally was a handprint in white paint left on the property of victims or near their bodies. [redacted]

Maximiliano Hernandez Martinez Anti-Communist Brigade (MHM)
Responsible for many high-profile killings over the past five years. Victims often found clutching leaflets with the group's message on them. MHM has used newspapers, radio, and even television to make announcements of acts committed and operations planned. [redacted]

Salvadoran Movement of 28 March (MS-28)
Group first appeared on the scene in late 1983. Its propaganda and name—28 March 1980 was the last day of Phase I government expropriation of large plantations—suggest the group represents the interests of a tiny group of fanatic coffee barons, many of whom probably reside in Miami. [redacted]

Organization for Liberation From Communism (OLC)
A group that appeared on the scene at about the time of the October 1979 coup; its current status is unknown. May have been absorbed by one or another of the above groups, possibly the ESA, which some [redacted] believe comprises personnel from former terrorist organizations such as the White Warriors Union and the Salvadoran Anti-Communist Brigade. [redacted]

White Warriors Union (UGB)
Formed in May 1977 following the leftwing kidnapping and murder of Foreign Minister Mauricio Borgonovo. The group was led by Roberto D'Aubuisson and other National Guard officers. [redacted] and emphasized the assassination of Catholic priests perceived to be active supporters of the insurgent movement. The UGB appears to have been disbanded soon after the October 1979 coup and D'Aubuisson's release from active duty. [redacted]

special investigations unit was created with US financial and technical aid to help the government analyze terrorist activities and bring to justice perpetrators of rightwing violence. The much-publicized case against five National Guard enlisted men charged with torturing and killing four US churchwomen in late 1980 was finally resolved. All five were convicted in May by a civilian jury and sentenced to 30 years in prison.

Although an initial coverup of the affair probably was orchestrated by midlevel National Guard officers, there has never been any credible evidence that the killings of the churchwomen were ordered by higher authority. [redacted]



Conservative women's group confronts visiting liberal US legislators in January 1983 with protest signs demanding that Salvadoran President Magana refuse to dialogue or negotiate with the rebels and calling Senator Dodd a "white rat."

Judicial proceedings against civilian and military personnel arrested for past terrorist acts also continue to progress, albeit unevenly. One setback in this effort was the Supreme Court's review of the case of Lt. Lopez Sibrian, which in November 1984 resulted in his acquittal of all charges stemming from the 1981 murders of two US labor advisers. As suggested by [redacted], however, US pressure recently helped Duarte in December to convince a reluctant military high command to have the lieutenant dropped from the list of active-duty officers. Moreover, Duarte's government in November warned local media owners of fines and other legal sanctions if they continued to publish or broadcast declarations from self-proclaimed rightwing terrorist organizations. After a two-month hiatus, however, extremist communiqués and death threats are once again being published. [redacted]

The administration is now struggling with the rightist-dominated Legislative Assembly to create a judicial commission to oversee broad reforms proposed by Duarte for the civil and criminal justice system.

[redacted], a recent Assembly bill would cut off funding to this and other presidential commissions, probably forcing Duarte to veto this legislation. These obstacles could also affect plans by the President to activate a "criminological institute" to investigate specific rightwing terrorist acts. [redacted]

[redacted] that its first priorities would

include an investigation of the March 1980 assassination of Archbishop Romero, said by other [redacted] to have been authored by D'Aubuisson and his backers [redacted]

Self-Imposed Constraints

In addition to changes in the military and judicial systems, last year's reduction in rightist violence is also attributable, in our opinion, to a variety of self-imposed constraints. Some extreme rightists probably concluded that, in the wake of the visit by Vice President Bush in 1983, at least a temporary stand-down in terrorist activities would be required to direct the attention of the US administration away from the issue of human rights. Almost certainly, in our view, the US Congressional focus on political violence in El Salvador and the need for continued US military and economic aid provided extreme rightists additional incentives to curtail terrorist operations. [redacted]

The right wing probably also has been encouraged by the upturn in government fortunes on the battlefield since January 1984 and a commensurate loss in political support for the rebel alliance. The far right may believe that favorable trends in the military situation have temporarily reduced the need for civilian terrorist operations against insurgent elements. [redacted]

The election campaign last year ironically also played a role in reducing rightwing terrorism. It is our judgment that many rightist leaders genuinely believed that D'Aubuisson and his ARENA party could win the 1984 presidential elections. Hence, there was an incentive for extremists not to undermine their leader's public appeal with high-profile terrorist violence. Following the electoral defeat of ARENA, moreover, the party became less cohesive. [redacted]

[redacted] Extremist elements, therefore, may have been preoccupied less with fomenting violence and more with sorting out their options in dealing with the new Duarte government and the scheduled Legislative Assembly and municipal elections in March 1985. [redacted]

**Some Prominent Cases of Rightwing Terrorism,
1980-84**

Salvadoran Cases

- In December 1980, National Guardsmen killed eight members of a rural cooperative in San Vicente after they were denounced as subversives by the local Civil Defense. Disposition: The Guard commander who ordered the killings was transferred to another department. The military promised financial remuneration to families of the victims.
- In March 1980, Archbishop Oscar Romero was assassinated while performing Mass in a San Salvador chapel, presumably by right wing. Disposition: No government investigation or arrests.
- During 1981, atrocities occurred in two working-class neighborhoods of the capital. Some 40 suspected leftists were summarily executed by elements of the 1st Infantry Brigade and Treasury Police. Disposition: No investigations or arrests.
- During 1981-82, some 30 peasants from Sonsonate Department were abducted and killed by local Civil Defense forces and their bodies thrown into a well in the town of Armenia. Disposition: Government investigation recently begun; three suspects arrested.
- In November 1982, Army troops stationed in Usulután abducted at least 15 youths from nearby Santa Elena and murdered them. Disposition: No investigation or arrests.
- The same month, Army and Civil Defense personnel tortured and killed at least seven members of La Florida farm cooperative in Santa Ana Department. Disposition: No investigation or arrests.
- In February 1983, between 20 and 75 Indian farmworkers from Las Hajas jurisdiction of Sonsonate Department were abducted and killed by Army and Civil Defense troops commanded by Captain Figueroa Morales of the 6th Detachment. Disposition: Figueroa was transferred, and three Civil Defense suspects detained last May. No further information.
- In November 1983, Civil Defense forces tortured and murdered nine peasant men and women in Zaragoza hamlet in La Libertad Department. Army Lt. Col. Denis Moran—reputed death squad leader—ordered the killings. Disposition: No investigation and no arrests. Lieutenant Colonel Moran recently transferred to the Inter-American Defense School in Washington, D.C.
- In February 1984, seven Civil Defense members were on trial in Santa Ana for murders committed over a four-year period. Disposition: No information on the outcome.
- The April 1984 trial of notorious ex-Army Maj. Guillermo Roeder—arrested in 1982 for crimes ranging from embezzlement to murder—was considered a key test of the Salvadoran justice system. Disposition: Roeder was acquitted of all charges.
- In November 1984, a Salvadoran Lutheran minister was murdered by two Army personnel in San Miguel. Disposition: The perpetrators confessed and were remanded to civil authorities.

Cases of US Citizens

- The murder of four US churchwomen in December 1980 was resolved in May 1984, when five National Guardsmen were convicted by a civilian jury and sentenced to 30 years in jail.
- The case of John Sullivan—a freelance journalist abducted and killed by presumed rightists in December 1980—is unlikely to ever be fully investigated by the government. Investigations have yielded no solid leads.
- The case of two US labor advisers assassinated in January 1981 remains tenuous. Two National Guard triggermen confessed in 1982, but two officers who ordered the killings and wealthy civilian conspirators have escaped prosecution in civilian courts. One of the officers was released from active duty in December under orders from President Duarte.



El Salvador: Performance on Certification Issues

Interagency Intelligence Assessment

Approved for Release

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12 July 1983

[REDACTED]

NIC M 83-10011

EL SALVADOR: PERFORMANCE
ON CERTIFICATION ISSUES

Information available as of 11 July 1983 was
used in the preparation of this Assessment.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

KEY JUDGMENTS

The government of El Salvador has made continued progress on most certification issues during the past six months. Progress in achieving substantial control over the armed forces and prosecuting those responsible for the murders of six Americans has been marginal at best, however. As in previous assessments, our primary base of information continues to be [REDACTED], which we judge as accurate and objective. [REDACTED]

Improvement has been most evident in the area of government reforms. Agrarian reforms have made steady advances, particularly in the distribution of land and titles to thousands of new beneficiaries. Recent banking laws also have completed a process begun in 1980 to reorganize financial institutions and reallocate credit to the general public. [REDACTED]

Cooperation among moderate elements in the government has increased over the last six months, with an attendant erosion of extreme rightist influence. This has enabled the administration to step up the process of democratization, especially evident in the enactment of an amnesty law that has reduced the number of political prisoners by 70 percent. Other advances include the creation of a Peace Commission charged with seeking political reconciliation with the guerrillas and completing the draft of a new constitution. [REDACTED]

Major weaknesses remain, however, in the government's ability to safeguard human rights, particularly in the countryside. Killings by rightwing death squads and elements of the armed forces continue. Efforts by the military high command to instill respect for human rights among the rank and file have had some effect in elite units, but little in poorly trained garrison units and civil defense forces. [REDACTED]

The cases involving the murder of the six US citizens have yet to reach trial stage because of continued legal and procedural bottlenecks in the weak criminal justice system. Conspirators in the killings of two

Note: This Interservice Intelligence Assessment, approved by the National Foreign Intelligence Board, was prepared under the auspices of the National Intelligence Officer for Latin America. The Assessment was prepared by the Central Intelligence Agency, the Defense Intelligence Agency, the National Security Agency, and the intelligence organization of the Department of State. Also participating were the intelligence organizations of the Army, the Navy, the Air Force, and the Marine Corps. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

UP labor advisers, moreover, continue to avoid prosecution following appellate court decision to drop current charges until new evidence can be developed [REDACTED]

DISCUSSION

Human Rights

"Making a concerted and significant effort to comply with internationally recognized human rights" (Criterion for judging Salvadoran Government's performance).

1. During the past six months, the Magana administration in El Salvador has continued to make progress on some human rights issues, particularly as evident in the recent implementation of the amnesty law. As noted in previous assessments, however, the measurement of progress in El Salvador is a relative thing, complicated by abuses of prisoners before detention in a government facility and the use of violence by extremists against their perceived political opponents.

2. The insurgent war has intensified this year as the guerrillas have stepped up efforts to broaden their areas of control and inflict major damage on the country's already crippled economy. The rate of combat deaths on both sides has increased, but the rate of civilian political deaths¹ has not changed substantially.

Figures for the first six months of 1983 show a slight increase over those for the last six months of 1982—178 civilian political deaths versus 160. The average so far this year, however, is well below the monthly death rate of 217 for all of 1982. (See accompanying chart.)

3. The trend toward improvement is also reflected in the recently enacted and swiftly implemented amnesty law. Since it went into effect in May 1983, the authorities have released more than 500 of the 733 political prisoners in jail at the time amnesty went into effect—guerrillas and labor leaders as well as leftist intellectuals suspected of subversion and detained under the emergency decree. Most of those released

¹ Political deaths are those that take place outside a zone of combat and which clearly suggest a political motive—for example, civilians murdered because of suspected sympathy with the insurgents. Civilians killed as a result of being caught in a crossfire or other military-related activities are classified as combat deaths.

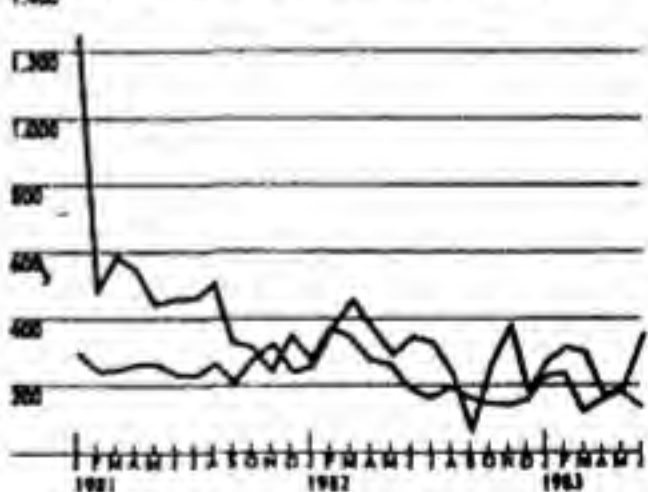
had been held at the relatively modern Mariona Prison outside the capital.

4. The facility frequently visits the prisoners are well fed and are receiving excellent treatment, including access to schooling and rights to conjugal visits in private dormitories. In addition, who recently visited the Ilopango Women's Prison indicate that more than half of its 92 political prisoners have been released under the amnesty. Conditions there are reported as good, and some of the common criminals stated they are denied privileges that are extended to political detainees.

5. We believe the government may extend the amnesty beyond its mid-July cutoff in an effort to attract political exiles and disenchanted members of insurgent groups inside the country. Despite the work-

El Salvador: Insurgency-Related Civilian and Military Deaths, 1981-June 1983

Total Number of Civilian Deaths
Monthly Average Number of Military Killed or Wounded



previously high number of political prisoners who have benefited from the law, it reportedly has attracted so far only about 200 guerrillas and camp followers. Nevertheless, [redacted] of the government's Human Rights Commission—which is currently investigating reported cases of abuse of civilians by both guerrilla groups and armed forces units and attempting to locate over 100 missing persons—appears optimistic that others will take advantage of the law. [redacted] guerrillas are required only to sign a formal request for amnesty, and that they are not interrogated or required to provide details of their past actions. Like the released political prisoners, insurgents seeking amnesty are free to remain in the country or to leave. Meanwhile, the Amnesty Commission's recently established rehabilitation committee is assisting beneficiaries in finding work or in resettling on land belonging to the agrarian reform agencies. Those desiring to leave El Salvador are offered free passports, and discussions are under way with governments in Latin America, Canada, Australia, and Western Europe over resettlement programs.

6. Despite these and other efforts—including a massive publicity campaign—we believe that fear of reprisals from the extreme left or right will inhibit most guerrillas and political exiles from taking advantage of the amnesty. The government hopes that fair treatment of insurgents turning themselves in will spark additional defections, but this may be offset by accounts of former political prisoners of abuses before their internment.

7. These abuses apparently are continuing. [redacted] government and military officials assume responsibility for actions employed by the Army in combat situations before prisoners are transferred to detention centers. The positive effects of the amnesty program could be further offset by recent death squad activity against some prisoners who had been released before the amnesty.

Control of the Armed Forces

"Is achieving substantial control over all elements of its own armed forces."

8. [redacted] control of the armed forces has increased slightly since January and indicates that the performance of the

military remains mixed. The military is increasing its efforts to professionalize its ranks and instill respect for human rights. Nevertheless, the intensity of the guerrilla war—particularly recent massacres of captured soldiers—and its influence on domestic lawlessness probably have generated continued abuses by armed forces elements against the civilian population.

9. Military leaders are maintaining their efforts to reduce human rights violations within the armed forces. Moreover, reporting indicates more success in the last six months in fire control during fighting in populated areas, particularly on the part of combat pilots and artillery units.

10. Improved fire discipline also has been noteworthy among US-trained infantry battalions that have been engaged in heavy counterinsurgency campaigns in San Vicente and Morazan Departments. [redacted] troops moving into guerrilla base areas and occupied towns are treating local inhabitants with greater consideration. This has sometimes resulted in more voluntary provision of food and shelter by local inhabitants, as well as information on guerrilla activities.

11. Treatment of captured prisoners—whose numbers remain small—continues to improve. [redacted] the Army increasingly is treating wounded guerrillas and interrogating them humanely. They are then evacuated to San Salvador rather than being left in the hands of local commanders. Some of those captured have related the concern of guerrilla leaders over the superior performance of US-trained units and their ability to generate more positive attitudes among peasants toward the government.

12. In addition, the new Defense Minister has issued a human rights manual to all military units in the country. Similar guidelines have had only limited impact within the security forces over the past two years. Nevertheless, this action helps reinforce the commitment to curb abuses by field commanders and their troops.

13. Hard information on armed forces operations and procedures remains sparse.

[redacted] Moreover, poor recordkeeping and lack of reporting within the

[redacted]

military institution itself frequently reduce the availability of information. [redacted] have found that military personnel are frequently discharged from the service for human rights offenses and other criminal acts, pending trials in civilian courts. These cases cease to be the responsibility of the military and quickly become buried in the labyrinth of civil and criminal justice proceedings. In one eastern department, for example, [redacted] identified 17 civilian court cases involving former military personnel. All had been separated from the armed forces for serious crimes such as assault, rape, kidnapping, and murder. Most cases were still pending, although two had resulted in acquittals, and a few others in convictions.

14. Government efforts to investigate mass slayings that occurred last fall have stalled because of a lack of witnesses—a frequent problem that underscores the continuing climate of fear and polarization in El Salvador. [redacted] who conducted their own inquiry have concluded that regular Army troops in Usulután Department and civil defense forces in Santa Ana Department summarily executed a total of 19 peasant farmers in two separate incidents. Victims were either suspected guerrilla sympathizers or targets of personal vendettas fostered by other local peasants and landowners. Some participants in the killings have been detained by authorities, but possible witnesses have refused to make official depositions. One eyewitness subpoenaed by civilian courts was murdered before he could testify.

15. Another widely publicized mass killing under investigation occurred in February 1983 in Sonsonate Department. [redacted] at least 18 peasant farmers were shot in the woods of the farm cooperative of Las Hojas. [redacted] that as many as 60 more may have been killed. [redacted] the victims were members of the National Salvadoran Indian Association who were targeted by local cattle ranchers following land disputes. Individual members of the local civil defense forces and some 200 regular troops led by an Army captain were involved. The captain was placed under military arrest in April pending further investigations by government prosecutors of charges that his departmental commander, Colonel Araujo, ordered the killings. He has since been released. Araujo has publicly admitted sending his troops to Las Hojas on search and

destroy missions against "known subversives." [redacted] civil defense personnel attached to Araujo's command have threatened witnesses with death, thus prompting peasant leaders to seek protection from the National Guard. The local Guard commander has promised to patrol the Indian cooperatives and provide them with weapons for self-protection.

16. Other

[redacted] suggests that some military elements continue to engage in random acts of violence. Disappearances and unidentified bodies still are reported in areas controlled by specific units of the armed forces. Most of these, [redacted] are victims of fighting against guerrillas. [redacted] however, has identified the Cavalry Regiment and the signal garrison in San Salvador with illegal detentions and elimination of suspected guerrillas and their sympathizers. Furthermore, [redacted] reported earlier this year that Air Force security troops at Ilopango airbase abducted and killed three civilian workers for reasons unknown.

Progress on Reform

"Is making continued progress in implementing economic and political reforms, including land reforms."

17. The Magana administration has made steady progress in economic, political, and land reforms during the last six months. This period has been characterized by increasing cooperation among the major parties in the government, reflecting a growing maturation of the still-fragile democratic system as well as the erosion of power of some extreme right elements.

18. The continuing movement toward reform was not affected by the recent power struggle in the military, which resulted in the resignation of Defense Minister Garcia in April. Although Garcia had been a primary force for moderation and had earned the enmity of extreme rightists for his support of reforms, his replacement by General Vides represented both the transition of power through established procedure and the continued dominance of the pragmatic mainstream of the officer corps. Furthermore, the impact

[REDACTED]

of the crisis in the military was defused by the intervention of President Magana, who, in requesting Garcia's resignation, asserted his civilian authority as constitutional head of the government.

19. Vides's generally conservative political orientation and ties by marriage to the landed aristocracy suggest he may be less committed to the reform process than was his predecessor. In addition, extreme rightists appear to believe he will prove less adept than Garcia at keeping the military out of partisan politics. This view gains credibility with Vides's recent appointment of Colonel Carranza as head of the Treasury Police. Carranza is an important rightist figure with links to extremist Assembly President D'Aubuisson. Nevertheless, Vides has so far shown himself cognizant of the need to reinforce the moderate policies of Magana—in part to satisfy US policy requirements—and we believe that the military under his command will continue to support the government's efforts to strengthen reforms.

20. Neither factionalism in the military nor escalating insurgent attacks have deterred the armed forces from keeping agrarian reform on track.

As of 17 June there were some 194,000 beneficiaries in Phase I (redistribution of large landholdings to peasant cooperatives), while Phase III (land to the tiller) has benefited some 305,196 formerly landless peasants.* Since October the government has exceeded most of its immediate goals with regard to title application and distribution. Applications for new titles, for example, have climbed from a cumulative total of 58,615 in October to 64,837 as of 17 June 1983. During the same period, cumulative distribution of permanent titles to Phase II properties has grown from 400 to 2,453, suggesting that changes made last year in management of the program are now paying dividends. While the government is still behind in its schedule for distributing provisional titles, the rate of distribution has increased markedly since January from a cumulative total of 34,674 to 42,415.

21. Progress on land reform continues to be clouded by rumors and allegations of large-scale evictions of peasants by former landowners.

The government

* This number includes direct beneficiaries and their dependents based on a formula of six individuals per family.

is about to undertake a survey to determine the number of illegal evictions, and it recently began a nationwide publicity campaign to discourage such actions. Meanwhile, [REDACTED] indicates that the armed forces continue their efforts to return evictees to their new lands. As a result, any heretofore unreported evictions are now more likely to come to the attention of the authorities.

22. The ability of Magana to continue reforms in the face of rightist opposition has been reflected in his handling of economic issues. This spring, for example, the administration implemented the final step in reforming the banking system by offering up to 49 percent of the equity in nationalized banks to private investors, with limitations on the amount an individual investor can purchase. The offer capped a three-year struggle to take control of credit out of the hands of a few wealthy families. In a further sign that extreme rightwing influence is waning, the Assembly recently defeated a campaign by major coffee growers to weaken the powers of the National Coffee Institute, thereby contributing to equitable returns for small producers.

23. The inability of the far right to prevail on economic issues is mirrored in its overall reduction of power in the government during the past six months. In February a dispute in the Assembly concerning rule changes and a cabinet appointment sparked increased cooperation by moderate right and liberal deputies against obstructionist parliamentary tactics by far right leader D'Aubuisson and his party. This enabled President Magana to replace a rightwing minister with a moderate from a nongoverning political party, thereby reducing the share of power for D'Aubuisson's faction and strengthening executive leverage with the Assembly. Subsequent maneuvers by moderates succeeded in eliciting D'Aubuisson's public declaration to resign upon completion of the new constitution.

Elections and Negotiations

"It is committed to holding free elections at an early date and, to that end, has demonstrated good-faith efforts to begin discussions with all major political factions in El Salvador."

24. Planning for elections has been hampered by partisan differences over posts to be contested and the eligibility of candidates, as well as disruptive changes in the electoral timetable. Nevertheless, [REDACTED]

[redacted] that the major parties in the government have informally agreed to hold the presidential balloting on 13 November. A major hurdle, however, will be the promulgation of the constitution, without which an electoral code cannot be developed nor the structure of a new government determined.

25. Other problems such as funding and organization for the electoral contest finally are being addressed by the five-man Election Council. Although the Council remains insistent on devising a new registration system before November, some political leaders now acknowledge that such a program almost certainly is not feasible. Officials of the rightist National Republican Alliance and the liberal Christian Democratic Party, for example, recently have indicated that they will accept open registration—such as existed during the March 1982 elections—for the sake of expediency.

26. Open registration may inspire postelection charges of fraud among partisan groupings, but it should help encourage another large turnout on the part of voters unable or unwilling to return to specific municipalities as would be required with formal registration. Turnout will still be determined to a considerable extent, however, by the ability of the five guerrilla factions to coordinate their efforts to sabotage the balloting more effectively than in March 1982.

27. The government's Peace Commission has made recent contacts with political spokesmen for the insurgent alliance in an effort to determine their interest in the amnesty program and participation in elections.

Magana has indicated that, if these contacts show promise, [redacted] be willing to postpone elections until next year. This would provide more time for leftist groupings to prepare their campaigns. Magana also apparently believes that the prospect of leftist participation in the election would contribute to blunting the impact of guerrilla operations during the preselection period.

28. We believe, however, that efforts to generate positive leftist interest in the balloting are likely to prove ineffective. The insurgents continue to reject the electoral process in favor of negotiations leading to a

power sharing arrangement. Having increased their military pressure, the insurgents now are engaged in major diplomatic lobbying for a dialogue with the governments of El Salvador and the United States.

Murders of US Citizens

"Good-faith efforts to investigate murders of its US citizens and bring to justice those responsible for those murders."

29. The case of the five National Guardsmen charged with killing four US churchwomen in 1980 has again been set back by judicial procedures. A lower court decision to begin trial proceedings was overturned this spring by an appellate court, which cited irregularities in the presentation of physical evidence. Technically, this only postpones an inevitable jury trial and allows prosecutors more time to organize their case. [redacted] however, are skeptical of the government's ability to win a conviction. They point out that government attorneys are ill prepared and poorly motivated to handle the case. [redacted] argue can be strengthened by use of a private prosecutor to represent the interests of the families of the victims. This, however, has not occurred.

30. Two other National Guardsmen have confessed to murdering two US representatives of the American Institute for Free Labor Development (AIFLD) in 1981 and are due to stand trial following an appellate review of the evidence. The court, however, has rejected formal requests by the Attorney General to prosecute two other participants in the crime, Lt. Lopez Sibrian and businessman Hans Christ.

[redacted] the government has one year to introduce new evidence or the case will be officially closed. [redacted] indicates that the Magana administration is pressing for prosecution and probably will appeal to the Supreme Court.

31. Lopez Sibrian, meanwhile, remains on active duty but in administrative detention and is not allowed to travel outside the country. Hans Christ is residing in Miami, apparently under an assumed name. Another conspirator, Captain Eduardo Avila, remains in hiding subject to arrest as a murder suspect and Army deserter.



Washington, D.C. 20505

OCA 3082-92

2 OCT 1992

The Honorable Paul Simon
Committee on Foreign Relations
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Simon:

The Director has asked me to respond to your letter of August 19, 1992. I want to assure you that this Agency fully supported the work of the Salvadoran Truth Commission in investigating and resolving human rights crimes in that country. As you know, the State Department is the focal point for the handling of information from the US Government to the Commission. We have provided to State for the Commission all verifiable information we have on incidents and events under the Commission's review. The Truth Commission has several more weeks to complete its work, and we will continue to respond as appropriate to its requests.

The Agency has likewise worked through State Department to assist the work of the Ad Hoc Commission reviewing the Salvadoran military staff. We understand the Ad Hoc Commission has now completed its work.

Thank you for your letter and for the opportunity to assure you of our continuing support to peace in El Salvador. Please contact me if I can be of further assistance.

Sincerely,

/s/ Stanley M. Moskowitz

Stanley M. Moskowitz
Director of Congressional Affairs



2P

19 DEC 1991

The Honorable John Joseph Moakley
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Moakley:

I was very pleased to receive your letter of December 6 regarding your view of CIA's role in the investigation of the murder of the Jesuits in El Salvador. Your gracious initiative to put into its proper perspective the vicious speculation in The New York Times made an extremely favorable impression in the CIA and was especially gratifying to those directly involved with matters concerning El Salvador.

Many CIA personnel, appalled as any civilized person must be by the murders, have worked long and hard to contribute to bringing all of the killers to justice and to improve human rights practices by the military of El Salvador. We are accustomed to unfair public invective, but the speculation questioning CIA's integrity regarding such a heinous crime was especially disheartening. Your rapid and forthright response represents an expression of understanding and support we are seldom privileged to receive. It is doubly rewarding given your intensive involvement and deep commitment to human rights issues in general and to the Jesuit murder case in particular. Please be assured of my commitment, as well as the Director of Central Intelligence's, and allow me to reiterate my appreciation for your letter.

Sincerely,

Deputy Director for Operations

DOC. MICRO. SER.

MAY 5 1992

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[REDACTED]
Central Intelligence Agency



Washington, D.C. 20505

26 MAR 1992

The Honorable Bud Shuster
Ranking Minority Member
Permanent Select Committee
on Intelligence
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D. C. 20515

Dear Bud:

I appreciate your forwarding to me the letter from Salvadoran General Juan Rafael Bustillo refuting allegations that he was a conspirator in the murder of the six Jesuits.

I am forwarding with this letter a summary of the information we have on the General's alleged involvement in this crime. As you will see, we can neither categorically prove nor disprove his involvement. As you know, this event has received our most serious attention as a reporting subject and we have provided the community and the Justice Department with all the information we have been able to obtain. Unfortunately, none of the information is firsthand and is insufficient to draw any valid conclusions.

We continue to search for information on this matter and will advise you should we develop any definitive information.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]
Deputy Director for Operations

Enclosure

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Washington, D.C. 20540

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Dear Mr. McCall:

Transmitted herewith are answers to the questions asked during a briefing in the Senator's office on 18 February 1982 concerning Central America. As you will note, the answers to these questions carry a continuing classification of SECRET. I would appreciate your making the enclosure available to Senator Byrd for his information and background.

Sincerely,

Chief, Legislative Liaison

Enclosure

THIS LETTER IS DOWNGRADED
TO UNCLASSIFIED UPON REMOVAL
FROM ENCLOSURE

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February 1982

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[REDACTED]

2. Who is responsible for killing Archbishop Romero?

There has never been any definitive information regarding those responsible for his death.

ALL PORTIONS OF THIS DOCUMENT
ARE CLASSIFIED S E C R E T

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CL BY 236853

[REDACTED]

Washington, D.C. 20505

~~10 JAN 1990~~

OCA 4280-89

The Honorable Dante B. Fascell
Chairman
Committee on Foreign Affairs
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Mr. Chairman:

This acknowledges receipt of your December 19, 1989 letter on behalf of the special committee appointed by the Speaker to gather information about the November 16th murders of six Jesuit priests and two women in El Salvador.

The House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence has already made the same request and we have agreed to make available to that Committee all responsive documents.

Sincerely,

W. H. Webster

William H. Webster
Director of Central Intelligence

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[REDACTED]

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
NATIONAL FOREIGN ASSESSMENT CENTER

15 February 1980

MEMORANDUM

Rightist Terrorism in El Salvador

Fearing that the governing junta will be unable to prevent a takeover by the revolutionary left, rightists in El Salvador are stepping up violent actions. Their goal is to retaliate against the left and to encourage a rightwing coup. Although our information on vigilante groups is sketchy--partly reflecting their history of fading in and out of existence--the involvement of security force personnel and members of the economic elite is widely accepted and substantiated [REDACTED]

The principal rightist paramilitary organization, the White Warriors' Union (UGB), was formed in 1977. It focused its initial activities on the clergy, claiming responsibility for murdering a Jesuit priest in mid-1977 and threatening to kill all remaining Jesuits if they did not leave El Salvador by year's end. Last year, the organization killed another priest, and it probably was involved in dozens of additional--but unattributed--murders of teachers, peasants, and leftist activists. The UGB published a communique last month threatening further action against the left. [REDACTED]

This memorandum was prepared by the Latin America Division of the Office of Political Analysis. The memorandum was requested by the Latin American representative of the National Security Council.

[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

In the past, suspicion of government involvement with the terrorist right was prompted by ex-President Romero's reluctance to speak out or crack down against the UGB. [redacted] have provided some corroboration on links between the extremist right, the government, and the Salvadoran oligarchy. [redacted] claims that the UGB was controlled by unopposed ranking members of the Romero regime. [redacted] two middle-grade National Guard officers were directing the terrorist activities. [redacted]

A new group--the Organization for Liberation from Communism (OLC)--which announced its formation last month and took credit for two bombings, may be linked to the former head of the Guard, who is known for his ultraconservative views. The OLC may have been responsible for killing a leader of a prominent leftist party that withdrew from the government in January. An active-duty National Guard officer [redacted] responsible for one of the recent bombings. [redacted]

Hardliners in the economic elite probably have provided personnel, funds, equipment, and organizing ability to the rightist cause. [redacted] that a wealthy rancher had used his airplane to bring a large quantity of arms into the country, that a group of oligarchs intended to finance a terrorist campaign, and that members of the group had solicited support from rightwing leaders in Guatemala. [redacted] representatives of an influential businessmen's association admitted that some terrorist acts were carried out by persons in the private sector who were frustrated at the erosion of public order. [redacted]

[REDACTED]

MEMORANDUM

El Salvador: Military Prospects

The armed forces, despite training, equipment, and logistical problems, have contained insurgent operations with present weaponry and personnel. But it has been a military struggle between two weak opponents and the left is clearly in the process of upgrading its armament. Especially with increased external support, the guerrillas could relatively quickly present a more formidable threat--one that would severely tax both the resources and the will of government forces. Major external aid probably will be essential for the Salvadoran armed forces to survive. To be effective in forestalling victory by a guerrilla movement totally inimical to the US, such aid probably would have to be of a magnitude several times the \$5-6 million and small number of advisors presently under consideration.* Even with increased assistance there would be no guarantee of success.

Current Strategy of the Far Left

██████████ indicates renewed determination by the far left to upgrade its war of attrition and to initiate new "insur-

⁵ There is, however, no reliable estimate of the Salvadoran armed forces military needs.

This memorandum was prepared by the [redacted] Office of Political Analysis [redacted]

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rectional" activities aimed at weakening the government domestically and further undermining its credentials abroad. Increased arms shipments to the insurgents from Nicaragua, Cuba, other Communist bloc members, and governments and groups from the Middle East have been [REDACTED]. This aid has encouraged leftists to reject negotiations and press the insurgency. It has also so far compensated for the continued erosion of their domestic political base as well as recruiting and organizational deficiencies. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] an imminent leftist offensive supported by [REDACTED] suggest large numbers of international volunteers from Cuba, Nicaragua, and Panama will participate in a major offensive this month. [REDACTED]

that an "international column" had already arrived in northern El Salvador. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED], there were indications of stepped up support activities including: sharply increased military operations at the major Nicaraguan base at Montelimar; some unusual night flights at Managua's airport; and the departure of Cuban and other third country personnel from Nicaragua, [REDACTED] bound for El Salvador. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] however, revealed no unusual activity at Montelimar. [REDACTED], Salvadoran leftists still [REDACTED] disagreed among themselves over timing for a final offensive. [REDACTED] about an insurgent "general offensive" in the northernmost department of Chalatenango also were overblown. The guerrillas [REDACTED] were pursuing hit and run tactics; [REDACTED] events in Chalatenango bears this out. [REDACTED]

Nevertheless, Chalatenango is the logical starting point for a campaign to demonstrate military and political momentum as a prelude to a major offensive in 1981. The insurgents' present tactics appear to be to sustain a high level of assassinations and other spectacular terrorist attacks, and to escalate rural military assaults. An immediate goal is to control a "liberated zone" in which to set up a provisional government. The far left is assured of receiving more than token recognition for such a shadow government. They believe this further international isolation of the civil-military junta would undercut any plans by the incoming US administration to boost military support for the junta. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Continued improvements in armament would put a final offensive strategy within reach once the guerrillas overcome the logistical and training problems associated with an influx of new equipment. At the moment, both Salvadoran radicals and Havana might exaggerate the extent of the current leftist push, hoping to precipitate a rightwing coup or a Christian Democratic withdrawal from the government prior to the change in US administrations. It is clear, however, that both Cuba and Nicaragua are already collaborating more closely and stepping up their assistance. If a major offensive were to show promise, it could have a snowball effect, spurring recruitment, submerging tactical and personality differences among insurgent groups, and encouraging foreign supporters to accelerate diplomatic and military aid by several orders of magnitude. [REDACTED]

Status of the Civil Military Government

The recent junta shakeup and the present government restructuring promise some greater efficiency and a higher political profile for junta President Duarte, but no greater civilian control over the armed forces. The Defense Ministry controls military affairs and retains veto power over policy in other important areas. [REDACTED]

The cogoverning Christian Democratic party did gain a commitment from the military to crack down on abuses by the security force and to begin cleaning house. So far, the military's actions offer a hint of promise in some areas. But no more than a marginal near term impact on the level of officially tolerated antileft terrorism is expected. [REDACTED]

In a virtually unprecedented action, the military has admitted responsibility for the recent murders of several campesino leaders, promising indemnification and disciplinary action against those involved. The transfers of some high-level officers associated with abuses are scheduled for January. The transfers--if they take place--would be an important symbolic gain but would still fall well short of the Christian Democrats' objectives; moreover, they would only be a superficial restructuring from the military's perspective. The military is, meanwhile, footdragging in the investigations of the assassinations of six leftist leaders and the murders of the four US Catholic women. [REDACTED]

1

[REDACTED]

Continuing indiscriminate warfare against the left will likely lead to another crisis between the military and the Christian Democratic movement. On the whole, the military still has a low opinion of the party for failing to attract broader popular and international support. There remains latent sentiment for throwing out the civilians entirely, even though the military high command appears to recognize the political utility of the party's participation. The improved personal relationship between Christian Democratic leader Duarte and leading military officers has been the glue holding the coalition together through several crises. But it has been at the expense of isolating Duarte from some elements of his party.

US Aid

The US military aid extended to date has neither increased US influence over the Salvadoran armed forces nor made them substantially more effective. The limited deliveries, attached conditions, and on again off again timetable have left many Salvadoran officers believing US aid is illusory. This reinforces their resolve to go it alone, employing their own standards and practices.

The recent US interruption of economic and military aid to the Salvadoran Government conveyed different signals to different elements of the military institution:

- Some officers, despite their resentment, perceived the halt as an effort by the US to show its displeasure with security force abuses and encourage change.
- Other officers, however, read the US action as undermining the institution's long term chances for survival. In effect, they perceived the US siding with a small group of opportunistic Christian Democrats who--if they could not inspire the US to provide aid when it was most needed--were not worth retaining in the junta.
- When the economic and previously agreed upon military aid was then quickly restored, some officers felt the token offerings and promises to the Christian Democrats had already paid off, and their enthusiasm for follow-through waned.

[REDACTED]

Any move by the US with regard to military aid will be subject to similarly varying interpretations. Continuing to withhold military aid will probably not restrain and may even encourage the extreme right. Rightwing plotters, feeling they have little to lose with the current US administration, could even gamble on a coup in the next several weeks. So far, however, they appear to lack critical high level support. Many rightwing officers, in tandem with archconservative civilians, believe the incoming US administration will allow them to deal with the left as they see fit. They would tend to interpret upgraded military aid as license to employ indiscriminate tactics to crush the left. Other officers might recognize that such an increase was conditioned on improved performance, but we doubt they would be willing to risk military disunity by cracking down strongly on rightist elements while the guerrilla left remains such a potent threat. [REDACTED]

Thus, US aid will not necessarily ensure the continuance of a civilian component in the government--indeed it could provoke an outright military takeover. Moreover, military aid also entails tradeoffs with other US interests. Assisting the government as presently constituted will, for example, strain US relations with Mexico, which has publicly stated its opposition to US military aid; diplomatic complications would multiply were US assistance being given to a purely military rightwing government. Another consideration is that foreign supporters of the Salvadoran guerrillas would probably respond to increased US assistance by stepping up their own aid to the insurgents, feeding even more widespread violence. Finally, even under an optimistic scenario, it seems unlikely that the guerrilla threat can be permanently eliminated, so that some US support might have to continue for an extended period. [REDACTED]

In our judgment, the Salvadoran Government will probably not be able to withstand the threat from the left without substantial US or other external aid in the future. Arms flows to the insurgents, the likely policies of the foreign supporters supplying the radicals, and the weaknesses of the Salvadoran military institution argue such a need. El Salvador is a very small battlefield and the momentum could shift very quickly to the insurgents with the addition of only a thousand or so well armed combatants and a weakening of the will of government forces. (S [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
NATIONAL FOREIGN ASSESSMENT CENTER

4 March 1981

MEMORANDUM

EL SALVADOR: The Role of Roberto D'Aubuisson

Former Army Major Roberto D'Aubuisson has been an articulate and charismatic spokesman for the far right in El Salvador since leaving active service after the reformist coup on 15 October 1979. A protégé of "Chelo" Medrano, the ultra-rightist former chief of the National Guard, D'Aubuisson has served as principal mouthpiece for wealthy landowners and as a coordinator of the right-wing death squads that have murdered several thousand suspected leftists and leftist sympathizers during the past year.

While relatively intelligent, D'Aubuisson is egocentric, reckless, and perhaps mentally unstable. The philosophy he publicly espouses calls for the physical elimination of El Salvador's leftist opposition, which he defines as anyone not supportive of the traditional status quo. His hatred of those he suspects of harboring leftist sympathies motivated his visits to the US last spring, during which he condemned the Carter administration's policy toward El Salvador. After his US visa was cancelled, D'Aubuisson traveled throughout Latin America seeking military and political support for his Broad National Front--an ultra-conservative group of wealthy Salvadorans.

This memorandum was requested by the National Security Adviser to the President. It was prepared by [REDACTED] Office of Political Analysis.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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NOV 1993

[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
NATIONAL FOREIGN ASSESSMENT CENTER

18 March 1981

MEMORANDUM

EL SALVADOR: The Right Wing

The right wing in El Salvador is broad by almost any definition. Conservative tendencies run wide and deep in the military institution, the business community, and beyond. The extreme right wing, however, which currently favors a coup d'etat and unrestricted use of vigilante groups against suspected leftists, is a smaller group. [REDACTED]

The rightist tendency in the armed forces is predominant. Nearly three fourths of the officers are decidedly conservative, and Defense Minister Garcia--the strongman in the government--represents a consensus view that the lasting solution to the extreme leftist problem should be military rather than political. Armed forces officers who now favor a right-wing coup are relatively few--a small clique of junior and middle-grade officers allied with some far-right civilians and retired military officers. [REDACTED]

The extreme rightist officers are currently held in check by the more pragmatic high command, which represents the mainstream of military thinking. The extreme-right clique does not presently have a single senior active-duty officer as its leader. It had previously regarded Defense Minister Garcia as its unofficial chief, but the extremists have recently grumbled about his political compromises with the Christian Democrats. National Guard Chief Vides Casanova is also sought after as a potential coup leader, but he too has rejected the extremists' overtures, at least for the time being. [REDACTED]

This memorandum was requested by Vice President Bush. It was prepared by [REDACTED] Office of Political Analysis.

[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

The Role of Roberto D'Aubuisson

Former Army Major Roberto D'Aubuisson has been an articulate and charismatic spokesman for the far right in El Salvador since leaving active service after the reformist coup on 15 October 1979. A protege of "Chele" Medrano, the ultra-rightist former chief of the National Guard, D'Aubuisson has served as principal henchman for wealthy landowners and as a coordinator of the right-wing death squads that have murdered several thousand suspected leftists and leftist sympathizers during the past year.

[REDACTED]

While relatively intelligent, D'Aubuisson is egocentric and reckless. He favors the physical elimination of El Salvador's leftist opposition, which he defines as anyone not supportive of the traditional status quo. His hatred of those he suspects of harboring leftist sympathies motivated his visits to the US last spring, during which he condemned the Carter administration's policy toward El Salvador. After his US visa was cancelled, D'Aubuisson traveled throughout Latin America seeking military and political support for his Broad National Front--an ultra-conservative group of wealthy Salvadorans.

[REDACTED]

D'Aubuisson is funded by members of the extreme right-wing Salvadoran elite, most of whom now live in Guatemala and the US. Though small in number, these wealthy expatriates have reportedly spent millions of dollars to support D'Aubuisson and his few followers in their effort to overthrow the present junta and return the country to right-wing military rule.

[REDACTED]

D'Aubuisson's personal following is limited to a handful of wealthy civilians and some extreme rightist military officers, many of whom are not on active duty. His influence in the military has waned over the past year, as many of his former colleagues in the junior officer corps have looked to more senior officers for leadership.

[REDACTED]

Nevertheless, D'Aubuisson could play a spoiler role by continuing to encourage right-wing terrorists--many of whom are enlisted personnel in the security forces--and by issuing inflammatory public declarations against the junta and those sympathetic to the reform process. D'Aubuisson's penchant for action is underscored by his sponsorship of several unsuccessful coups.

2

[REDACTED]

during the past year. His efforts to turn back the clock on reforms and initiate an all-out civil war against the left could succeed if he manages to convince a majority of the officer corps that the new US administration would accept an ouster of the Christian Democrats from the government. [REDACTED]

Right-Wing Terrorism

The ultra-right in El Salvador has a long history of using violence as a political tool, perhaps marked most vividly by the widespread repression and murder of campesinos following the failed peasant rebellion in 1932. In the 1960s, a surge of political activity among peasants and urban workers led to the creation of many new right-wing organizations, both official and clandestine. [REDACTED]

One such government-sponsored group--the National Democratic Organization (ORDEN)--was comprised of tens of thousands of conservative rural peasants and served as a tool of the landed elites. It included many former armed forces personnel who were part of the nation's reserve force, the Territorial Service. ORDEN served principally as an intelligence gathering organization--identifying and taking direct action against real and suspected enemies of the regime. [REDACTED]

Augmenting the semiofficial organizations were a variety of secret vigilante groups that have faded in and out of existence. Traditionally, right-wing death squads have included civilian mercenaries, idealists tied to particular wealthy elites, and active and retired security force personnel. During the Romero regime (1977-79), the involvement of members of the security forces and of the economic elite in the principal rightist terror organizations was substantiated [REDACTED]. Given the impunity with which death squads continue to operate today, it is clear that security force personnel continue to cooperate with and participate in vigilante terror. [REDACTED]

Leadership and Organization

Information on the leadership and organization of right-wing terrorist groups is sketchy. A small group of wealthy expatriates living in Guatemala and the US apparently are the chief backers for the several clandestine right-wing groups now operating in El Salvador. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

In January, [REDACTED] reported that six wealthy Salvadorans living in Miami were behind the kidnapping and intimidating of other businessmen who were showing sympathy for the civil-military government or US policy in El Salvador. These individuals reportedly fund the right-wing death squads in El Salvador, and may have ordered the deaths of the two US AFL-CIO representatives assassinated in January. Tied to this group of wealthy expatriates are businessmen in El Salvador who belong to the Broad National Front. This organization is headed by a young ultra-conservative, Alfredo Mesa Lagos, and Major Roberto D'Aubuisson.

Some of the civilian terrorist personnel may have received training in Guatemala and perhaps in Costa Rica from like-minded organizations. Membership in right-wing terrorist groups probably approaches several hundred, but our information in this area is limited. They use a broad range of side arms, machine pistols, and rifles that are readily available to them on the regional black market and in the US; security force personnel obviously have ready access to weapons. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

25 March 1981

MEMORANDUM

EL SALVADOR: The Right Wing

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The extreme rightist officers are currently held in check by the more pragmatic high command, which represents the mainstream of military thinking. The extreme-right clique does not presently have a single senior active-duty officer as its leader. It had previously regarded Defense Minister Garcia as its unofficial chief, but the extremists have recently grumbled about his political compromises with the Christian Democrats. National Guard Chief Vides Casanova is also sought after as a potential coup leader, but he too has rejected the extremists overtures, at least for the time being. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

1979. A protege of "Chelo" Medrano, the ultra-rightist former Chief of the National Guard, D'Aubuisson has served as principal henchman for wealthy landowners and as a coordinator of the right-wing death squads that have murdered several thousand suspected leftists and leftist sympathizers during the past year.

[REDACTED]

While relatively intelligent, D'Aubuisson is egocentric and reckless. He favors the physical elimination of El Salvador's leftist opposition, which he defines as anyone not supportive of the traditional status quo. His hatred of those he suspects of harboring leftist sympathies motivated his visits to the US last spring, during which he condemned the Carter administration's policy toward El Salvador. After his US visa was cancelled, D'Aubuisson traveled throughout Latin America seeking military and political support for his Broad National Front--an ultra-conservative group of wealthy Salvadorans.

[REDACTED]

D'Aubuisson is funded by members of the extreme right-wing Salvadoran elite, most of whom now live in Guatemala and the US. Though small in number, these wealthy expatriates have reportedly spent millions of dollars to support D'Aubuisson and his few followers in their effort to overthrow the present junta and return the country to right-wing military rule.

[REDACTED]

D'Aubuisson's personal following is limited to a handful of wealthy civilians and some extreme rightist military officers, many of whom are not on active duty. His influence in the military has waned over the past year, as many of his former colleagues in the junior officer corps have looked to more senior officers for leadership.

[REDACTED]

Nevertheless, D'Aubuisson could play a spoiler role by continuing to encourage right-wing terrorists--many of whom are enlisted personnel in the security forces--and by issuing inflammatory public declarations against the junta and those sympathetic to the reform process. D'Aubuisson's penchant for action is underscored by his sponsorship of several unsuccessful coups during the past year. His efforts to turn back the clock on reforms and initiate an all-out civil war against the left could

[REDACTED]

succeed if he manages to convince a majority of the officer corps that the new US administration would accept an ouster of the Christian Democrats from the government. [REDACTED]

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The ultra-right in El Salvador has a long history of using violence as a political tool, perhaps marked most vividly by the widespread repression and murder of campesinos following the failed peasant rebellion in 1932. In the 1960s, a surge of political activity among peasants and urban workers led to the creation of many new right-wing organizations, both official and clandestine. [REDACTED]

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Augmenting the semiofficial organizations were a variety of secret vigilante groups that have faded in and out of existence. Traditionally, right-wing death squads have included civilian mercenaries, idealists tied to particular wealthy elites, and active and retired security force personnel. During the Romero regime (1977-79), members of the security forces and the economic elite participated in the principal rightist terror organizations. Given the impunity with which death squads continue to operate today, it is clear that security force personnel continue to cooperate with and participate in vigilante terror. [REDACTED]

Leadership and Organization

Information on the leadership and organization of right-wing terrorist groups is sketchy. A small group of wealthy expatriates living in Guatemala and the US apparently are the chief backers for the several clandestine right-wing groups now operating in El Salvador. [REDACTED]

1

[REDACTED]

A small group of wealthy Salvadorans living in Miami are believed to be behind the kidnapping and intimidating of other businessmen who have shown sympathy for the civil-military government or US policy in El Salvador. These individuals reportedly fund the right-wing death squads in El Salvador, and may have ordered the deaths of the two US AFL-CIO representatives assassinated in January. Tied to this group of wealthy expatriates are businessmen in El Salvador who belong to the Broad National Front. This organization is headed by a young ultra-conservative, [REDACTED] and Major Roberto D'Aubuisson.

[REDACTED]

The extreme right wing therefore has limited need for external support, given its financing by millionaire exiles. The terror squads use a broad range of side arms, machine pistols, and rifles that are readily available on the regional black market and in the US. The involvement of security force personnel in rightist terrorism insures a further supply of arms and license to use them. For example, this week's attack on the Nicaraguan Embassy in San Salvador by assailants using RPG-2 rockets follows the capture over the past month or so of a substantial supply of these weapons by government troops. [REDACTED]

Membership in right wing terrorist groups probably approaches several hundred, but our information in this area is limited. Security force personnel operate on their own or are employed in an off duty capacity by civilian elements. Mercenaries outside armed forces ranks are also utilized. [REDACTED]

We are unable to determine the extent to which former Nicaraguan National Guard personnel may be involved in this activity. Following Somoza's overthrow, some 1,300 Nicaraguan troops arrived in El Salvador, the vast majority enlisted personnel. [REDACTED] suggested a large number of these personnel were to be integrated into the Salvadoran armed forces, but we never received confirmation and suspect the numbers actually integrated were probably quite modest. Many others may have been recruited into the private guard forces of the elite. Members of either group could easily be involved in right wing terror, but it is impossible to estimate numbers. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

The rumor that Guatemalan troops or paramilitary forces are active in El Salvador is heard frequently. [REDACTED]. Our information confirms contacts and consultations between right wing Salvadoran and Guatemalan elements--and some civilian terrorist personnel may have trained in Guatemala with like minded organizations--but we have no persuasive evidence that significant assistance has taken place. It seems extremely unlikely that the Guatemalan Government would have authorized the dispatch of government personnel, in mufti or otherwise, to El Salvador. [REDACTED]

Nonetheless, even prior to the self-exile of El Salvador's conservative economic elite, there were frequent contacts between hard lining businessmen in Guatemala and El Salvador and some soliciting of funds from the Guatemalan brethren. The travels of Major D'Aubuisson attest to continuing contacts, [REDACTED] have discussed the possibility of providing funds or men to the Salvadoran right wing. Although the current level of right wing activities in El Salvador could easily be maintained without resort to outside aid, in the event of a major Salvadoran crisis a segment of the Guatemalan right would probably provide concrete assistance if asked. [REDACTED]

The question regarding weapons traced back to US military posts is based on a misunderstanding. Weapons--specifically those captured at Comayagua, Honduras, in late January--have been traced back to US forces formerly in Vietnam, not to stores recently held at US bases.

[REDACTED]

ef

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

24 May 1983

MEMORANDUM FOR: Assistant National Intelligence Officer
for Latin America

FROM: [REDACTED], Acting Chief, Central America

SUBJECT: Political Violence and Insurgent Propaganda in
El Salvador

The following responds to your request of this morning for information on civilian and military deaths, the orientation and methodology of Salvadoran organizations reporting on political violence, and the external propaganda apparatus of the extreme leftist alliance. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] "Official figures" are those of the government of El Salvador [REDACTED]

1. Official death rates 1981-1983

	1981	1982	1983 (current)
Civilian Deaths (Total)	6122	2629	745
Military Deaths (Total)	998	1150	696

We can provide no reliable estimate of civilian deaths caused by any particular group. We believe, however, that the combined impact of separate actions--legal and illegal--of the Army, the various security forces, and right-wing vigilantes still probably accounts for a majority of civilian deaths. An educated guess would be that between 35 to 45 percent of the

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[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

killing may be at the hands of guerrillas and common criminals. Insurgents regularly execute rural public officials and suspected government collaborators and their families. In addition, the guerrillas are increasingly strafing commercial and private vehicles and are threatening peasants with death if they plant crops this summer. Meanwhile, murder-for-hire and crimes of passion remain staples in El Salvador's violence-prone society and are largely indistinguishable from political killings. [REDACTED] NF)

[REDACTED]

3. The Salvadoran insurgent alliance maintains a worldwide propaganda and fundraising network reportedly comprising at least 70 solidarity committees in perhaps several dozen countries and permanent offices in many major cities--e.g. New York, Washington, Toronto, Mexico City, Panama, Brussels, Frankfurt, Amsterdam, Paris, and Rome. Guerrilla representatives regularly lecture at university campuses and Church conferences in the western democracies, and have excellent access to political organizations, government officials, and the international press. The insurgents also frequently visit Communist Bloc countries and radical Third World states where they have received considerable political, financial, logistical, and material support. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]



Washington, DC 20505

DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

2 March 1984

EL SALVADOR: D'AUBUISSON'S TERRORIST ACTIVITIES

Introduction

D'Aubuisson's involvement in rightwing terrorist activities has been alleged in a variety of [redacted] since the late 1970s. [redacted] have had the characteristic of unsubstantiated rumor or allegation. [redacted] little corroboration on specific activities attributable to D'Aubuisson has been available. Over the past year, however, several [redacted] have alleged D'Aubuisson's complicity with terrorist elements in the military and the civilian ARMA party. [redacted] moreover, have added credibility to [redacted] on D'Aubuisson's involvement in the assassination of Archbishop Romero.

POOR ORIGINAL

This memorandum was requested by Vice-President Bush. It was prepared by [redacted] ALA. [redacted]

Approved for Release
NOV 1993

D'Aubuisson's Military Contacts

Before leaving the armed forces in the wake of the October 1979 military coup, Major D'Aubuisson had served much of his career as an intelligence officer with the National Guard. He and several colleagues--graduates from the academy classes of 1963, 1964, and 1966--worked directly under or in cooperation with National Guard Director Medrano, a notorious and powerful figure in military and rightwing civilian circles. Medrano had his proteges focus on counterintelligence and rural security; during the 1960s and 1970s, D'Aubuisson and his colleagues helped develop civilian intelligence networks and vigilante organizations controlled by the National Guard. They also engaged in illegal detentions, torture, and the killing of prisoners--habits which suggests stayed with some of them after the 1979 reformist coup.

Some of D'Aubuisson's most notorious past associates in the military were Lieutenant Colonels Staben, Iacapa, Iepeda, Cruz, Ochoa, Ponce, and Moran. These and other middle-grade officers were in turn the mentors of a new generation of junior officers to have been involved in death squad and other illegal activities. The murder of two US labor advisors at the Sheraton Hotel in San Salvador in January 1981, for example, was authorized by two young officers known for their criminal activities and close association with D'Aubuisson and other extremist officers.

D'Aubuisson's Political Organization

In May 1980, D'Aubuisson was jailed and then exiled for coup plotting. He left for Guatemala and formed the Broad National Front (FAN), a semi-clandestine political organization bent on overthrowing the reformist regime in San Salvador. indicates that FAN received significant funding from wealthy Salvadoran exiles living abroad, and have suggested FAN links with US politicians and businessmen. The FAN used black market contacts to arm a small para-military organization in El Salvador that included both civilians and military personnel, some of whom probably belonged to existing death squads loyal to D'Aubuisson.

By the fall of 1981, D'Aubuisson had reorganized the FAN into a bonafide political party known as the Nationalist Republican Alliance (ARENA). He convinced businessmen and other professionals to join the party and support candidates in the

March 1982 Constituent Assembly elections. During this period, rightwing gunmen [redacted] allied with ARENA killed several Christian Democratic party members, civil servants, and labor figures.

ARENA has become the second largest political party in El Salvador and probably is the best funded and organized going into this month's presidential election. Within the party, however, D'Aubuisson is [redacted] to maintain a team that engages in political intimidation, including abduction, torture, and murder. Until the beginning of this year, the head of this team was Dr. Hector Regalado, the chief of security for the Assembly. He and several subordinates belonging to ARENA reportedly utilized members of the Secret Anti-Communist Army and the Maximiliano Hernandez Martinez Brigade--two death squads founded several years ago by D'Aubuisson--to carry out murder and sabotage against ARENA's real or perceived enemies. [redacted] show that Regalado's group was considering targeting US Embassy officials in response to press stories about rightwing terrorism. Following the visit of Vice President Bush and the resignation of D'Aubuisson from the Assembly to run for president, Regalado and two associates also left their public posts.

[redacted] on the status of the ARENA-sponsored terrorist groups. Killings in January and February of this year thought to be the work of rightwing extremists cannot be pinned specifically to D'Aubuisson or to any of several other death squads--military or civilian--known to exist.

Assassination of Archbishop Romero

[redacted] have accused D'Aubuisson of complicity in the murder of Romero in March 1980. [redacted] is credible, there is nothing that could be construed as hard proof.

While any of a number of rightwing death squads could have planned and carried out what was a relatively simple execution in a neighborhood chapel in San Salvador, there probably were few so fanatical and daring as D'Aubuisson to do it. [redacted] on the Romero assassination claim that D'Aubuisson and his colleagues held meetings in early 1980 to plan the killing. [redacted] those in attendance were asked to draw lots to determine who would carry out the act. [redacted]

indicate that military personnel comprised the hit squad and that a former National Guard enlisted man fired the fatal shot. [REDACTED] differ as to the logistics of the killing.

NOTE: [REDACTED] have been at variance in interpreting the death squad issue. [REDACTED] launched an effort to assure that [REDACTED] are working from the same data base. [REDACTED] are also being drafted in preparation for an intelligence community assessment of the death squads.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

National Intelligence Council

2 April 1984

MEMORANDUM FOR:

OCR

FROM:

WNT/DA

SUBJECT:

Intelligence Documents Relating to Death Squad Activity

The attached five memoranda are the only documents, cables, or reports produced by this Office that appear to pertain to the requests for such information found in House Resolutions 463, 464, and 467. We also have in our possession a file that includes [redacted] issued by the Directorate of Operations relating to death squad activity and several memoranda produced by the Office of African and Latin American Analysis on the same subject, but assume that this information will be provided by the appropriate Offices. Please let us know if there is anything else we can do to help.

[redacted]

Attachments:

1. SNIE 83.1-82, The Election Outlook in El Salvador
12 March 1982 - copy
2. IIA, El Salvador: Performance on Certification Issues
27 July 1982
3. SNIE 83.1-83, El Salvador: Performance on Certification Issues
14 January 1983
- ✓ 4. IIA, El Salvador: Performance on Certification Issues
13 July 1983
5. SNIE 83.1-84, The Election Outlook in El Salvador
6 March 1984

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Not for Public Release

DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE
8 JUNE 1987

El Salvador: Progress and Problems on Human Rights [REDACTED]

Summary

[REDACTED] indicates that El Salvador has made considerable progress in improving human rights since President Duarte was inaugurated in 1984. Official government links to rightwing death squads have ended, and political killings have decreased dramatically. Nevertheless, some problems remain, including a corrupt and inefficient judiciary, continuing abuses by lower-ranking soldiers and police, and the failure to prosecute high-ranking officers for human rights violations in the years prior to 1984. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] data indicates that most terrorism against civilians in El Salvador now is being carried out by the insurgents and that most guerrilla allegations of government abuses are unfounded. Lack of evidence to support insurgent claims--and the guerrillas' own tarnished human rights record--will continue to hamper their efforts to undermine San Salvador's international credibility. There is little likelihood the government will make significant progress in reforming the judiciary or prosecuting former officers suspected of human rights violations during the remainder of the Duarte administration. [REDACTED]

This memorandum was prepared by [REDACTED] Office of African and Latin American Analysis. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

. . .

During the 1970s and early 1980s, government human rights violations were responsible for driving many moderates into the insurgency, and the guerrillas effectively used the issues of repression and abuse to undercut San Salvador's legitimacy. Since President Duarte came to power, the insurgents have tried to maintain the pressure through constant allegations--mostly unsubstantiated--of atrocities and abuses. These efforts are intended to mobilize international opinion against the war in El Salvador and--optimally--end US assistance to the government. Nevertheless, the guerrillas have had declining success with the tactic because of the marked progress the Duarte administration has made in cleaning up its human rights record. [REDACTED]

Although the [REDACTED] the rebels now are guilty of most human rights abuses, the insurgents have deflected attention from their activities through the use of human rights front groups and sympathizers that deliberately distort and manipulate information. Guerrilla defectors from these fronts have publicly identified such groups as the Human Rights Committee for El Salvador (CDRES) and the Committee of Mothers of the Disappeared (Co-Madres) as staffed and advised by insurgents. A former member of Co-Madres has cited the head of the Salvadoran Archdiocese Office of Human Rights and Legal Aid (Tutela Legal)--whose human rights statistics are widely cited by governments and international organizations such as Amnesty International and Americas Watch--as being involved in channeling funds to the guerrillas. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] indicates these groups fabricate stories of human rights abuses and attribute them to the government. For example, the guerrillas have falsely alleged indiscriminate bombing and mistreatment of the population when the government has mounted its military sweep operations in rural areas. Of 50 "death squad" killings alleged by Tutela Legal for the last half of 1985 only three were directly linked by [REDACTED] to rightwing extremists. The remainder were either criminal murders (10), probable political murders by unknown assailants (18), or unverifiable incidents (19). In 1984, [REDACTED] analysis of Tutela Legal's methodology determined it was using military reports of guerrillas killed and converting them to civilians killed by the Army--a practice that was temporarily halted after [REDACTED] complaints, but had resumed by January 1986. The UN Special Rapporteur for El Salvador reported in 1986 that Tutela Legal's methodology is based on presumption, not facts, and that it counts victims as civilians even when they often are guerrillas. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Government Record Improves . . .

As part of its efforts to demonstrate concern on the issue of human rights, the government has allowed humanitarian interest groups--including the International Red Cross, Amnesty International, and Americas Watch--freedom to operate inside the country. Even human rights groups with links to the insurgents are allowed to organize actively, issue statements, and mount antigovernment demonstrations. With the exception of the guerrilla fronts--which focus entirely on alleged government abuses and seldom comment on rebel atrocities--most human rights groups and the responsible press agree that the government has made progress in ending its abuses. [REDACTED]

Among President Duarte's first initiatives after assuming office in 1984 was a campaign to ensure appropriate behavior by security officials. [REDACTED] Duarte ordered the elimination of all official government ties to the rightwing death squads and appointed trusted, reform-minded officers to head the security services. In addition, he moved to purge human rights violators and to indoctrinate police and military officers. [REDACTED] that police units that were notorious for their ties to the extremists have been abolished and that strict rules for handling and interrogating prisoners have been imposed. [REDACTED] figures indicate that political murders declined from 5,331 in 1983 to 261 in 1986. Moreover, between June 1985 and May 1986, 1,806 police officers were dismissed for crimes or unethical behavior, and 201 were remanded to civilian courts for punishment. In an effort to prevent future violations, the security services late last year began a 26-week course during which every police employee received 48 hours of instruction on human rights from the Red Cross, the Catholic Church, and the government human rights commission. [REDACTED]

The government continues to seek measures that will further humanize the treatment of prisoners. [REDACTED] that Duarte is seeking antiterrorist legislation from the Legislative Assembly to replace the lapsed state of emergency and Decree 50 that allow prisoners to be held and interrogated for 15 days before being charged with a crime. At present, the police--operating under a transitional law--are required to charge or release prisoners after 72 hours. Despite some grumbling, the military and security services have agreed to abide by these civilian-imposed rules. On 7 May, the President submitted legislation that would provide amnesty for 600 of 800 prisoners held under Decree 50, excluding only guerrilla combatants, foreigners, and those charged with terrorism. In addition, the proposed law would release all prisoners awaiting trial for crimes punishable by less than three years imprisonment. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

By almost any account, the reform measures have had their intended effect. The International Red Cross has told [REDACTED] that the human rights situation under Duarte is much improved. It reports the police and the Army have taken steps to minimize the abuse of prisoners and that only 15 to 20 percent of prisoners interviewed voice complaints. In October 1986, the UN Special Rapporteur for El Salvador reported a steady decline in politically motivated murders since 1984 and the absence of links between death squads and senior military officers. Canada restored bilateral aid to El Salvador as early as 1984 in recognition of the government's improving human rights record, and other critics of San Salvador, such as Australia, have admitted that Duarte's efforts have borne fruit. Finally, the government has continued to respect the rights of free speech, press, association, and assembly despite the ongoing civil war. [REDACTED]

. . . But Some Problems Remain

Despite the improvements, some abuses by the security services and armed forces continue. [REDACTED] that some prisoners have been deprived of sleep, threatened, and forced to exercise during prolonged interrogation. Occasional allegations of rape, electric shock, and beatings that leave no marks are made by some prisoners and human rights groups, but seldom can be verified. In addition, there are periodic non-combat killings of civilians attributed generally to low-ranking soldiers involved in personal vendettas or criminal activity. [REDACTED]

The fact that no senior officer has been convicted of a human rights violation also tarnishes the country's reputation. An incompetent and corrupt judiciary, officer cronyism, and fear of Army retaliation by juries have inhibited the civilians from vigorously pursuing longstanding cases of abuse. We believe Duarte may have decided to overlook violations that occurred prior to his inauguration as a tradeoff to ensure good civil-military relations and the military's continued willingness to abide by the human rights norms established by the civilian government. [REDACTED]

The Insurgent Record

As the government's human rights performance has improved, guerrilla violence against the civilian population has increased. We believe this trend has developed in part from narrowed insurgent battlefield options as a result of improved Army performance that has nearly halved guerrilla combatant strength since 1983. The guerrillas seem to have calculated that their increased use of terror tactics would go largely unnoticed by the international press while demonstrating at home the continued inability of the government to control rebel activities. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] that up to 60 percent of political killings are now committed by the guerrillas. Many victims are killed on the highways during periodic, week-long travel bans. During one ban in December 1986, for instance, four civilian coffee pickers were summarily executed by the guerrillas, probably as part of the insurgents' continuing efforts to disrupt the coffee harvest. [REDACTED]

Most killings seem, however, to be directed at peasants who refuse to collaborate with the guerrillas or are suspected of informing on them. [REDACTED] that four civilians--including two children--were murdered in December 1986 because they had distant relatives in the Army. [REDACTED] over the past year indicate the rebels maintain sites for the execution of civilians who refuse to join the insurgency. [REDACTED] indicate insurgent groups maintain lists of civilians to be killed for lack of cooperation. [REDACTED] indicated late last year that one guerrilla faction regularly executes insurgents it believes to be unreliable. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] the guerrillas also have turned to indiscriminate mining of roads and farmlands intended to intimidate the civilian population. Contact land mines killed 31 noncombatant civilians and children in 1984, 55 in 1985, and 51 during the first half of 1986. From January through July 1986, 172 civilians--many of them children--lost limbs to mines. The UN Special Rapporteur for El Salvador has concluded that the overwhelming majority of these mines had been placed by the insurgents. [REDACTED]

Net Assessment

The guerrillas have not been able to document significant government atrocities since the election of Duarte in 1984, and we believe they have begun to lose credibility, particularly as their own record has been increasingly tarnished. The insurgents undoubtedly will continue to accuse the government of abuses, particularly during large military sweeps. These campaigns are intended to mobilize international opinion against San Salvador and to pressure it to end such operations. Nevertheless, continued evidence of restraint by the Army in the field, combined with an absence of evidence of atrocities committed by the armed forces, will continue to erode the rebel position. [REDACTED]

Recent actions by Duarte have underscored his commitment to continued progress on human rights in the midst of a difficult wartime situation. Nevertheless, Duarte's preoccupation with the war and his reliance on the military for political support are likely to preclude progress in the near term on cleaning up the judiciary or prosecuting officers involved in past abuses. In

[REDACTED]

1989, however, the terms of all the conservative Supreme Court members--appointed by rightwing parties prior to Duarte's election--expire. If Duarte's Christian Democratic Party wins the presidential election that year, we believe these judges-- [REDACTED] a key obstacle to judicial reform--will be replaced.

[REDACTED]

The Director of Central Intelligence
Washington, D.C. 20505

National Intelligence Council

29 October 1987

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

FROM: [REDACTED]

National Intelligence Officer for Latin America

SUBJECT: Conversation [REDACTED]

1. On 28 October 1987, I had lunch with [REDACTED] in Washington. The purpose of the lunch, which was arranged by [REDACTED] of the NSC Staff, was to brief [REDACTED] on the situation in Nicaragua and to convince him of the importance that President Duarte not declare a unilateral ceasefire on 5 November.

2. During the course of the lunch [REDACTED] indicated that he had spoken with President Duarte by telephone the previous evening and that Duarte was extremely concerned with the security situation in El Salvador as a result of the recent assassination of the head of the unofficial human rights commission which Duarte believes was done by rightist elements. He added that in his opinion any [REDACTED] briefing on the situation in Nicaragua should include a detailed assessment of the security situation in El Salvador and any information that we had on the perpetrators of the assassination.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Approved for Release
NOV 1993

[REDACTED]



Washington, D.C. 20505

DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

22 November 1988

The FMLN in El Salvador:

Insurgent Negotiations Strategy and Human Rights Abuses

Summary

Recent efforts by the Salvadoran insurgency to bring international pressure on the Duarte administration to reopen peace negotiations are part of an effort to appear moderate and accommodating while portraying the government as inflexible. In our judgment, however, the insurgents would not negotiate in good faith, but would use talks instead to improve their strategic position and undermine confidence in the Duarte government. Meanwhile, we believe the insurgency's support among Salvadorans is waning in the wake of increased guerrilla intimidation, terrorism, and often indiscriminate attacks on civilians, especially in the capital. [REDACTED]

This typescript was prepared by [REDACTED] Office of African and Latin American Analysis. It generally reflects the views of the Intelligence Community. [REDACTED]

Approved for Release

NOV 1993

[REDACTED]

war--probably are involved. Increased political tensions related to the scheduled presidential election next year and the continuing insurgency will likely result in a relatively high rate of political violence in coming months. We believe the guerrillas, who are frustrated by their dim prospects for a political or military victory, probably will continue to account for the majority of political killings. [REDACTED]

* * *

Positive Trend Stalls

Political and suspicious killings of civilians in El Salvador--which had been declining sharply until last year--have increased slightly in the last 18 months. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] 280
civilians died in 1987 in incidents of political violence, a small increase over the previous year.¹ (See Fig. 1) Nevertheless, the overall level of deaths remains far below that of the early 1980s. Dwarfing the small increase in political killings last year was a doubling of "suspicious" murders, in which there are no clearly established political or criminal motives. (See Fig. 2). In the first seven months of 1988, the rate of killings with confirmed political motives was about the same as last year, while the number of suspicious killings has fluctuated wildly but generally remained higher than in 1987. [REDACTED]

As during the early 1980s, the increase in civilian killings has coincided with greater political and military activity by the Marxist insurgents. The guerrillas' political allies are preparing to participate in the March 1989 presidential elections, while rebel front groups continue trying to stage violent anti-government demonstrations in the capital. At the same time, guerrilla military actions--most notably economic sabotage and terrorist attacks--also have increased during the past year (see Fig. 3). Many Salvadorans--civilian and military--probably view these rebel activities as an attempt to exploit the country's more open political environment while simultaneously continuing the war. Although government

¹ Statistical data used in this typescript was obtained by [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] While the figures probably are not precise, we believe they reflect trends in political violence. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

operations since 1987 have disrupted some guerrilla activity, they have failed to make deep, permanent reductions in the insurgency. (S NF)

The Guerrillas' Record

[REDACTED] that the Marxist insurgents, no doubt frustrated by their inability to make dramatic military gains or attract significant popular support, are responsible for the majority of confirmed political killings. Guerrillas have killed civilians for--among other reasons--aiding the government, registering to vote, having relatives in the armed forces, or defying the rebels' frequent campaigns to blockade transportation. The rebels' indiscriminate use of landmines--a weapon adopted to compensate for tactical weakness--also has contributed to increased civilian casualties. Finally, the insurgents have kidnaped and murdered mayors, judges, local officials, political candidates, and civilians suspected of being government informers. For example, a guerrilla commander in Usulután Department recently killed two civilians suspected of collaborating with the Army and put their bodies on display to warn others in the area to avoid involvement with the military.

?

A major element of the insurgents' overall strategy is to foment unrest and violence in the cities. This includes using terrorist attacks to "bleed" government forces. Although we do not believe the guerrillas are deliberately and indiscriminately targeting civilians, their urban terrorist campaign has resulted in some civilian casualties.

Right-wing Extremists

Circumstantial similarities to death squad murders committed during the early 1980s suggest that right-wing extremists are responsible for at least some of the recent suspicious killings, although no one has claimed credit for them.

[REDACTED] some characteristics of death squad activity--the use of torture, execution-style murders, assassination by groups of armed assailants, and bodies being dumped some distance from the scene of the crime--increased last year. If rightists are indeed involved, we believe they have been acting primarily out of frustration with the slow rate of progress against the insurgents on the battlefield and out of fear that the insurgents are participating in the political process solely to expand their urban support networks for terrorism and subversion.

Despite its past association with death squad activity, we believe that the right-wing ARENA party currently does not sanction human rights abuses. Such actions would wreck the party's recent efforts to present a more moderate public image

[REDACTED]

and seriously jeopardize its prospects for winning the presidency next March. Indeed, we believe that, for the time being at least, even many ARENA extremists probably are cooperating with party moderates in an effort to strengthen their position and expand the party's popular appeal. Most ARENA leaders probably also are unwilling to risk the reduction or curtailment of US economic and military assistance that might result from unchecked violence. [REDACTED]

Nonetheless, some party hardliners may be involved in the crimes, although we lack definitive proof. [REDACTED] Roberto D'Aubuisson, ARENA's founder and honorary president, continues to maintain close ties with Dr. Hector Antonio Regalado, the former chief of a notorious death squad active in the early 1980s, though the two avoid appearing together in public. ARENA's recent electoral triumph and resulting control of the legislature may have inspired lower-ranking party members or independent rightists to act without the official knowledge or sanction of the party. [REDACTED]

The Armed Forces

[REDACTED] indicate that the number of politically-motivated killings committed by Salvadoran soldiers is on the rise. The armed forces have committed 12 of the 106 confirmed political killings so far this year--or 11.3 percent--compared to only about two percent in 1987. While we do not believe the killings are officially sanctioned, they may be the result of concern within the military about increased political activities by insurgent front groups. However, many of those soldiers and policemen most provoked by leftist activity probably are biding their time, calculating that an ARENA victory in the March 1989 presidential election could result in a sterner stance against the guerrillas and their supporters. [REDACTED]

Members of the Salvadoran armed forces, moreover, probably have carried out at least a few of the suspicious killings. [REDACTED] believes that frustration over the end of "state of exception" legislation in January 1987 has prompted some soldiers to kill suspected leftists. Without the special legislation--which suspended some civil liberties for suspected guerrillas--the Constitution permits the authorities to detain suspected guerrillas for only 72 hours before being turned over to the civilian courts. Most Salvadoran officers believe 72 hours is insufficient time to conduct a thorough intelligence interrogation and they are frustrated by the courts, which generally release suspected guerrillas for lack of evidence. [REDACTED]

Outlook

[REDACTED]

The Salvadoran government probably will respond to the increase in political killings by quietly pressing the military to be more vigilant in preventing and policing abuses. We expect the publicity-conscious Armed Forces High Command, in particular, will move to head off any sentiment or tendency among officers and troops to deal with the left through illegal means. Despite the frustrations arising from the many constitutional and judicial restraints imposed on the armed forces--at a time when they perceive the left as exploiting the hard-won democratic reforms guaranteed by the very government they seek to subvert--we believe most officers will want to avoid actions that would alienate the populace or place vital foreign assistance at risk.

[REDACTED]

Similarly, politically astute moderates within ARENA probably will exhort their extremist colleagues and constituencies to avoid any actions that threaten the party's political credibility and electoral prospects. Although the Christian Democrats may attempt to use the death squad issue to discredit ARENA during the months leading up to the March 1989 election, a similar effort by President Duarte prior to last March's legislative elections failed to have much impact at the polls. We believe a strategy of persuasion would be effective to some degree in reducing political killings as the impending presidential election invites greater international scrutiny.

[REDACTED]

Nonetheless, given El Salvador's long legacy of political violence, extremist attitudes on the left and the right, and frustrations on both sides over the slow rate of progress in the war, we believe political killings will continue. Tensions related to next year's presidential elections, particularly the increasing boldness of the left, may provoke further violence, in our view. The guerrillas--whose prospects for political or military victory are remote--probably will continue to commit most of the political killings.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Appendix: The Armed Forces and Human Rights

The Salvadoran armed forces--once responsible for the greatest number of human rights abuses--have since the early 1980s significantly improved their conduct. US aid and influence have facilitated the professionalization of the Army, permitting it to wage a "cleaner" war. Today, all members of the security services receive human rights training from the International Red Cross, the Catholic Church, and the government's human rights commission. Soldiers and police who commit crimes are routinely brought to trial before civilian courts, [REDACTED] and many have been dismissed from the service for various offenses. In addition, [REDACTED] that concern about civilian casualties has driven the military to adopt stricter rules of engagement. Rigorous restrictions have been placed on the use of air and artillery support near populated areas, and infantry seldom employ "reconnaissance by fire"--firing blindly into an area to determine whether the enemy is present. Moreover, despite the likelihood that most prisoners will be released within 72 hours--under guidelines in effect since January 1987--government troops still capture more guerrillas than they kill, [REDACTED]

The prospect of US military assistance being curtailed, fear of negative publicity, and, in many cases, a growing realization that expanding popular support is critical to their counterinsurgency mission, have compelled officers to develop a keener appreciation for human rights. Colonel Rene Emilio Ponce, for example, an influential brigade commander who probably will become the next Chief of Staff, is working in his sector to promote greater public confidence in the Army, and he concedes that human rights abuses by government troops contribute to pro-guerrilla sentiment, [REDACTED] that Colonel Mauricio Staben--often linked to past abuses--last year requested additional human rights lectures for his troops and drafted a human rights manual. [REDACTED]

Despite the armed forces' improved performance and greater awareness of the importance of human rights, abuses still occur occasionally--albeit with far less frequency than during the early 1980s--and institutional factors tend to impede corrective action. Because the military has never created any formal mechanism for investigating human rights abuses, such probes are conducted on an ad hoc basis and the results usually are kept private, [REDACTED] Civilian institutions empowered to investigate the armed forces--such as the Attorney General or the US-funded Special Investigations Unit--often are reluctant to pry too deeply into the "internal affairs" of the military, El Salvador's most powerful and cohesive institution. Others, like the government's human rights commission, have no legal authority. In addition, the Salvadoran court system relies

[REDACTED]

more on confessions or eyewitness testimony than forensic evidence for convictions, and few witnesses are willing to testify in a human rights case--particularly one involving a military officer--out of fear of retribution. [REDACTED]

The insular, highly cohesive nature of the Salvadoran officer corps also hampers investigations of alleged abuses. Officers generally tolerate misconduct--whether human rights abuses, corruption, moral turpitude, or incompetence on the battlefield--on the part of their colleagues, and few have been subjected to strict disciplinary action. The officer corps tends to enact what [REDACTED] characterizes as a "code of silence" when one of their own is accused of wrongdoing. This collective protectiveness is, we believe, fueled by a desire to spare the military--and, by connection, themselves--any embarrassment.

[REDACTED]

EL SALVADOR: HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION

FIG. 1: CONFIRMED POLITICAL KILLINGS (MONTHLY AVERAGE)

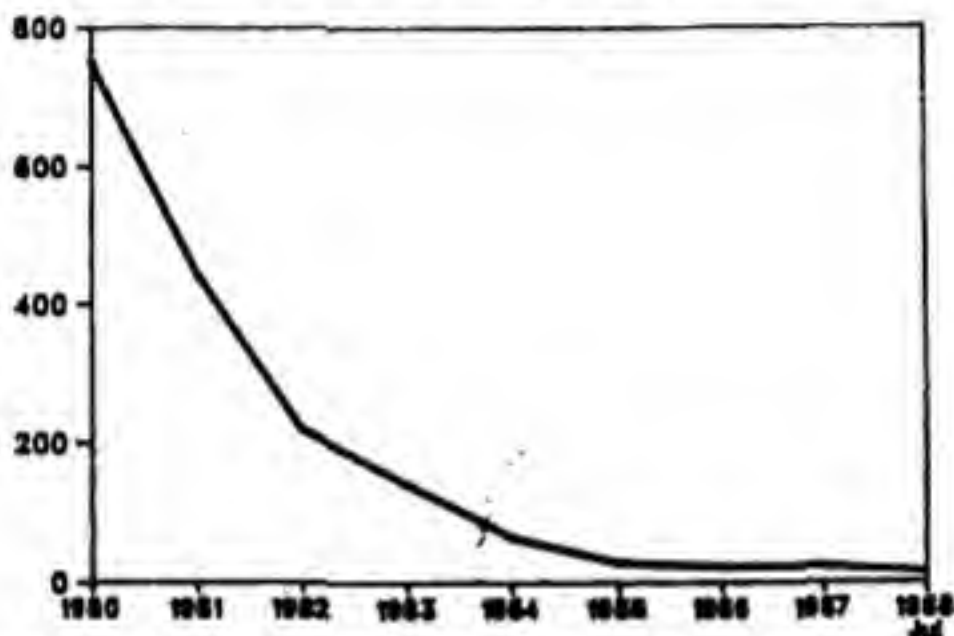
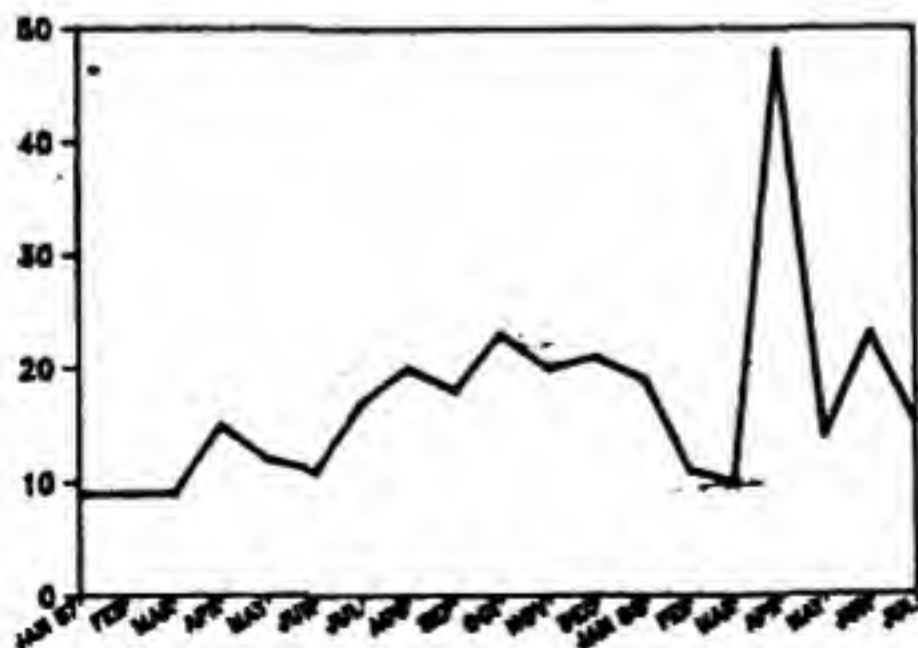


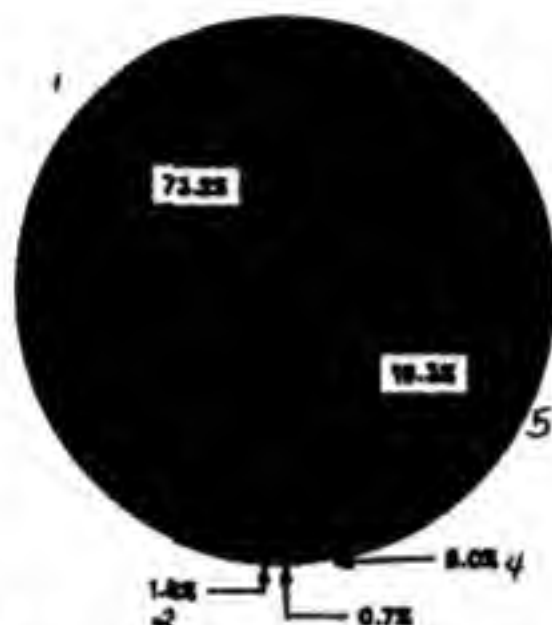
FIG. 2: "SUSPICIOUS" MURDERS—NO CLEARLY ESTABLISHED MOTIVE.



El Salvador: Confirmed Political Killings

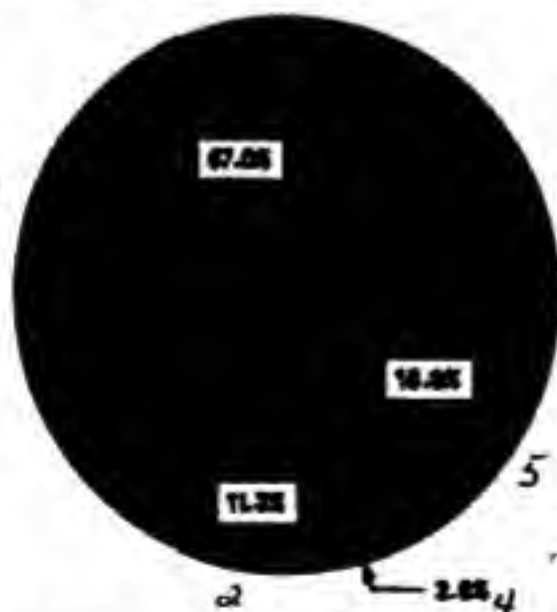
FIG. 3

1987--280



Does not include 36 civilian deaths from guerrilla landmines.

JAN-JUL 1988--106



Legend

- 1 ■ By Guerrillas
- 2 ■ By Armed Forces
- 3 ■ By Right
- 4 ■ By Unknown Assassins
- 5 ■ Civilians KIA*

Does not include 37 civilian deaths from guerrilla landmines.

* Killed in combat by both sides.

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[REDACTED]

13 April 1989

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: President-Elect Alfredo Cristiani

1. Given the wide press coverage of the official visit of El Salvador's President-elect Cristiani last week, I thought it would be useful to highlight key points covered during his presentation at the National Press Club on 7 April. [REDACTED]
2. The greatest number of questions focused on the extent of Cristiani's knowledge of death squads and his plans to control them. Cristiani seemed prepared to deal with this topic and gave a historical perspective, explaining that death squads were institutionalized in the late 1970's to deal with a growing insurgent threat which the military was ill-prepared to counter. He stressed, however, that death squads have been dismantled--and discredited--since 1981 and his government will vigorously prosecute individuals who are suspected of carrying out acts of vigilante violence. [REDACTED]
3. To reduce the incidents of rightwing violence, Cristiani emphasized several times that US aid should be focused on supporting efforts to improve the security services' ability to cope with terrorist activity, and on improving the justice system. Specifically, he said, he wants to create a civil service for judges, promoting them on merit rather than political patronage. (At present, judges at all levels are appointed by the Legislature and prior experience is not a prerequisite.) [REDACTED]
4. In response to repeated queries about Roberto D'Aubuisson, Cristiani denied having any proof that he was ever directly involved in death squad activity and defended his right to continue to have a role in ARENA. While reiterating his promise to crack down on suspected death squad members--including, by implication, D'Aubuisson--Cristiani did little to distance himself from D'Aubuisson. His emphasis on the party's new, broader base as evidence of ARENA's moderation probably did not go far enough to allay concerns about how much influence party hardliners will have over the direction of the party. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

5. Cristiani seemed less sure of himself when responding to questions about his regional policy--which, [REDACTED] he is just now beginning to formulate. The president-elect praised the US bipartisan accord. He also said he did not want to see the Contras dismantled because they are the most effective way to keep pressure on the Sandinistas to uphold their promise to democratize. He said his government will support continued humanitarian aid. Cristiani faulted Nicaragua for reneging on past commitments and said he wanted to see free and fair elections there. Cristiani skirted the issue of whether the Contras should be repatriated, but did stress that the US should continue to support them until there is evidence of opposition participation in Nicaragua. [REDACTED]

6. Cristiani did not elaborate on his economic agenda, but repeated earlier promises to SLOWLY loosen state control over banking and exports. He said he wanted to focus US economic aid to El Salvador on the promotion of economic development, but he was not specific. The implication was that aid should be used to encourage industrialization and non-traditional exports, rather than on agrarian projects. [REDACTED]

7. Finally, Cristiani said he wants to seek a political solution to the war rather than a military victory. A political agreement with the rebels, he said, is the best way to ensure long term peace. He does not believe the guerrillas truly want peace, and cited the recent acquisition of large numbers of East Bloc AK-47s and other weapons as proof that the rebels will continue their military offensives. He emphasized his willingness to negotiate with them at any time once he takes office, but did not mention any possible new concessions. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Middle America-Cuba Division
Central America Branch

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

24 July 1989

MEMORANDUM FOR: Associate Deputy Director for Intelligence

VIA: Chief, Central America Branch
Middle America-Cuba Division
Office of African and Latin America Analysis

FROM: [REDACTED] Military Analyst
Central America Branch
Middle America-Cuba Division
Office of African and Latin America Analysis

SUBJECT: Explosions at the Central American University

1. Four bombs exploded Saturday at the Jesuit Central American University in San Salvador, seriously damaging printing facilities, but injuring no one. [REDACTED] No group has claimed responsibility for the blasts thus far, but school officials suspect rightist groups. [REDACTED]

2. The Jesuit university serves as a think tank for radical leftists in El Salvador, [REDACTED] and has consistently lent political support to that country's Marxist insurgents. The university's rector, Ignacio Ellacuria, also maintains close contact with the guerrilla hierarchy and [REDACTED] played an active role in the development of one of the rebels' five factions. [REDACTED]

3. The Jesuits in El Salvador are staunch proponents of Liberation Theology--which attempts to merge traditional Catholic doctrine and Marxist dogma--and were responsible for the education of several guerrilla leaders during the 1960's and 1970's. [REDACTED]

4. El Salvador's other major university, the University of El Salvador, has long been a center for more violent insurgent activity, with rebel-backed student groups using the campus as a training base, source of recruits, arms depot, and staging area for attacks in the capital. Last week, for example, students at the university incited an armed confrontation with government troops who have been manning security checkpoints at entrances to the campus. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] [REDACTED]

Line

[REDACTED]

16 November 1989

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Briefing for Representative Duncan Hunter (R., CA)
Regarding Nicaraguan Exports to the FMLN

1. On 16 November 1989 at 1330 hours, in room 133 Cannon House Office Building, Representative Duncan Hunter received a briefing regarding [REDACTED]

2. [REDACTED] (U)
[REDACTED] Much of the discussion focused on the recent attacks on the military and civilian targets throughout San Salvador; how the insurgents will try and hold their current positions in the suburbs if they are able to obtain supplies; and the number of casualties inflicted on both sides. At the conclusion of the briefing, [REDACTED] said that we had just received word that five Jesuit Priests had been killed in San Salvador. He said that the details were sketchy but we do know that they were machinegunned at their residence by unknown assailants. (S)

3. There were no outstanding questions. (U)

[REDACTED]

House Liaison
Office of Congressional Affairs

Distribution: [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

32

21 November 1989

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Government Investigation of Killings in El Salvador

1. President Alfredo Cristiani--highly sensitive to international criticism of human rights abuses in El Salvador--has promised to punish the killers of the six Jesuits on 16 November even if they turn out to be members of his party or the armed forces. The government has launched an investigation with the help of British, Spanish, and US law enforcement agencies. Nevertheless, the eventual prosecution of those deemed culpable--especially if they are powerful politicians or high-ranking military officials--could be hindered by the cumbersome judicial process, idiosyncrasies of Salvadoran rules of evidence, and the vulnerability of judges to bribery or intimidation.

2. There is currently only circumstantial evidence implicating Roberto D'Aubuisson in the murder of the Jesuits, but we believe at a minimum that his exhortation concerning the priests could have spurred rightwing extremists to commit the crime. We believe that Cristiani would be willing to move against D'Aubuisson only if irrefutable evidence is developed against him. Were a solid, compelling case to be built, Cristiani might support a swift prosecution if he had the backing of key ARENA moderates. Likewise, the military leadership--which recently has investigated officers for abuses--may back quick action against D'Aubuisson or armed forces members if the investigation definitively points to their guilt. The President, his party, and the military, however, almost certainly would resist any calls from opposition leaders or from abroad to take any extra-judicial action--such as by putting D'Aubuisson under house arrest or ousting him from his seat in the Legislative Assembly.

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3. Cristiani would face serious repercussions in the ARENA party or the military especially if he moved against D'Aubuisson or others in the absence of a strong legal case. Although hardliners represent an increasingly isolated faction of ARENA, we believe D'Aubuisson remains the most popular figure in the party and ARENA members would probably try to protect him. Given the strong nationalist streak in ARENA, in the military, and among Salvadorans in general, some of whom are critical of what they view as US meddling in their affairs, there could be a strong backlash against Cristiani if he is perceived to be sacrificing D'Aubuisson to US pressure. A precipitous action by Cristiani--especially if backed by moderate Chief of Staff Rene Ponce--also could strengthen the hand of hardliners and lead them to renew their efforts to block Ponce's expected promotion to Defense Minister next month in favor of their preferred candidate, General Rafael Bustillo.

[REDACTED]

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Killing of Dr. Ignacio Ellacuria

1. The assassination of Ellacuria and other priests 0300 hours 16 November 1989 could have been perpetrated by the extremists of the left or the right.

Leftist Extremists

2. There are several occurrences which could indicate Ellacuria's death, on the night of 15-16 November 1989, could have been perpetrated by the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN):

a. Early morning 15 November 1989 an estimated 200 insurgents harassed the Police Officer Academy near Ciudad Merlio, between San Salvador and Santa Tecla. Insurgents set up roadblocks on the Santa Tecla highway, at the intersection of the highway and the road to Ciudad Merliot. By mid-morning the 15 November the insurgents withdrew from the area, leaving mines and booby traps in the Ciudad Merliot area. Civilians reported the presence of 100 insurgents eating and resting on the highway behind the Hoechst factory. Ciudad Merliot is two kilometers southwest of the University of Central America site where Ellacuria was killed.

b. One report received before the Ellacuria assassination indicated eighty troops of the Forces of Popular Liberation (FPL) from the El Volcan and Colonia Cerro Monte, and staging areas at Pinca El Espino, will try to take over Santa Tecla 16 November 1989. They will be reinforced by five to six groups of forces of the Revolutionary Workers Party of Central America Workers (PRTC) from Zaragoza who will be wearing National Police uniforms. They plan to attack the General Staff Headquarters and the National Directorate of Intelligence (DNI), and small groups of FPL members with LAW's and RPG-2's will attack Cherokee and other patrol vehicles of the U.S. Embassy. They also will attack the homes of individuals, including Armando Calderon Sol, the Mayor of San Salvador; Francisco Merino, Vice President of El Salvador; Roberto D'Aubuisson, Honorary President for Life of the Nationalist Republican Alliance (ARENA); Colonel Francisco Elena Puentes, Commander of the First Infantry Brigade; and possibly unidentified U.S. Embassy advisors who work with and support the Salvadoran Armed Forces.

3. Public statements by Ellacuria, in September 1989, differed from his earlier public statements in that they were increasingly favorable to the Government of El Salvador and to the detriment of the FMLN. The following are public statements given recently by Ellacuria which favored the Government of El Salvador and were unfavorable to the FMLN:

a. On 15 September 1989 Ellacuria said that Cristiani has proved to be his own man and not just a puppet of the Nationalist Republican Alliance (ARENA) party.

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[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

b. On 18 September Ellacuria said the FMLN should drop its demand that the 1991 elections be moved up, because it is unconstitutional, and the government is obliged to abide by the constitution. He suggested the FMLN should not make postponement of the elections a key issue because it is negative and can hinder the peace process. He expressed skepticism that the guerrillas can negotiate with the government, integrate themselves into the political process, demobilize their troops, and prepare for elections in only one year.

c. On 11 October 1989 Ellacuria called FECMAPAM's takeover of the Costa Rican Embassy a tactical error. He admitted that some in the left had criticized his call for support for both President Cristiani and the FMLN in their dialogue efforts.

Rightist Extremists

4. On 15 November 1989 at the National Assembly, there were separate meetings of the Legislative Assembly and the National Executive Committee (COENA) of the Nationalist Republican Alliance (ARENA) Party. [REDACTED]

5. D'Aubuisson said that by the following day (16 November) everything would be taken care of ("Se Arreglara"). [REDACTED] D'Aubuisson did not elaborate on this statement, but it was intended to calm the fears of those present.)

6. A short time later, D'Aubuisson began to berate the Jesuit priests who teach at the University of Central America-Jose Simeon Canas (UCA). He accused the priests of inventing lies, brainwashing UCA students, and of being responsible for their joining the FMLN.

7. D'Aubuisson then went to a chalkboard and diagrammed groups which he claimed were formed on the UCA campus at the instigation of the priests there, and which he said had joined with the FMLN against the government. The groups he listed included: the People's Revolutionary Army (ERP); the United Popular Action Front (FAPU); the National Revolutionary Movement (MNR); and the Nationalist Democratic Union Party (UDN).

8. D'Aubuisson then named several priests at UCA that he said had only come to El Salvador to take power in the country. He specifically named UCA Rector Ignacio Ellacuria; Segundo Montes; and Vice Rector Ignacio Martin-Baro. [REDACTED] D'Aubuisson frequently launches into polemics of this kind against his political enemies.)

9. The meeting ended with all present agreeing that the Salvadoran Government would have to take a hard line against the FMLN insurgents during the ongoing offensive.

10. [REDACTED] On 15 November six priests, including the three named above, were killed at UCA by unknown parties. D'Aubuisson's diatribe

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

against the UCA priests a few hours before their assassination raises disturbing questions which must be answered. Such behavior is in character with D'Aubuisson, however, and there is no information available at this time to link him or any of those known to be present at the meeting to the killing of the priests.)

11. (Ambassador's Comment: There are increasingly disturbing signs that those who executed Father Ellacuria and his fellow Jesuits were connected with elements of the extreme right. Description I have just had from Jesuits at UCA, and claims they made about eyewitness testimony make it extremely difficult to envision the assassinations as acts of an FMLN hit squad. The above information obviously strengthens that case. D'Aubuisson firing up his most radical followers with tales of the subversive activities of the UCA Jesuits just hours before their execution is difficult to dismiss as mere coincidence. Given the importance of getting at the truth of the Ellacuria matter, I have instructed [REDACTED] to pursue the leads offered by the above with whatever it takes to confirm or deny. I will submit my recommendations for what to do by SEPTEL.)

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

27 November 1989

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: The Situation in El Salvador

1. The recent Salvadoran insurgent offensive failed to meet the guerrillas' military and political objectives, although the rebels did succeed in projecting an image of military viability. Despite claims that the offensive was designed only to pressure the government into negotiations, it appears that the rebels saw the operation as an opportunity to spark a national insurrection and seize political power. The Salvadoran Armed Forces are pleased with their success in brunting the offensive, but the government stands to lose credibility if it does not prosecute the killers of six Jesuit priests. No one has yet to be charged with the killings. We expect the guerrillas to maintain military pressure on the government through assassinations, hit-and-run attacks, and sabotage of economic targets. With worldwide attention focused on El Salvador, the rebels probably will portray their more routine military activities as a continuation of their recent offensive.

2. The apparent Sandinista shipment of anti-aircraft missiles this weekend to the Salvadoran rebels represents an escalation of Nicaraguan--and probably Cuban--support to the insurgents. The weapons discovered Saturday in the aircraft wreckage--including 24 SA-7s--represent a significant leap in the technology available to the Salvadoran rebels. We believe the missiles will be used primarily against the Salvadoran Air Force, but the potential hazards to civil aviation cannot be dismissed. If the rebels possess large quantities of SA-7s, they may be able to operate in larger groups, as they did routinely earlier in the war, and more effectively threaten major military targets.

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[REDACTED]

11 December 1989

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Assessing the Judicial Process in El Salvador

1. The Salvadoran criminal justice system remains the weakest and least developed of the country's democratic institutions. In our judgment, the military, the civilian elites, and the extreme left all routinely circumvent or manipulate the formal judicial process. The government, for its part, has failed to allocate adequate resources or to address the systemic structural problems that impede the administration of justice in El Salvador. As a result, we believe most Salvadorans regard the formal judicial system as, at best, barely functioning. They probably believe the alternative--in which security and vigilante forces controlled by the military and civilian elites dispense their own versions of justice on an ad hoc basis--still predominates. Poor Salvadorans judge that the judicial process, although enshrined in a new constitution, is capricious and serves principally the interests of the rich and powerful.

2. Despite improvements over the past five years, we judge that the economically and politically powerful do control the judiciary in El Salvador. The process of selecting judges sustains a pattern of political cronyism. The ARENA dominated National Assembly, for example, elects the 14-member Supreme Court, which in turn appoints the 300 or so local judges. Although the occasional competent and independent justice does emerge, the norm is a poorly-trained judiciary, highly susceptible to manipulation by the party in power. In a recent gathering of Intelligence Community and other analysts, there was general agreement that ARENA leader Roberto D'Aubuisson had successfully packed the Supreme Court with justices sympathetic to his ideology and susceptible to his influence.

3. [REDACTED] indicate that archaic procedures, inadequate facilities, intimidation of justices and witnesses, and corruption continue to hinder the judicial process. The historical record shows that a combination of these factors has weighed heavily in the repeated failure of the government--despite pressure from the United States--to conclude a number of high-profile cases involving politically motivated killings. For example, in the important "kidnapping for profit" case--for which judicial proceedings began in 1986--involving two

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[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

military officers as defendants, a judge was assassinated after announcing that he intended to press the case. His successor dropped serious charges and transferred it to another court, and the new judge, hours before his term ended, released the defendants. Pressure from the United States prompted then-president-elect Cristiani--aware that this was a major test of his intentions on human rights--to use his political influence to have the release decision rescinded.

4. We believe the deficiencies in the judicial system could have a similar impact on the case of the recent Jesuit killings, especially if military personnel or right-wing groups were involved. Even if the investigation leads to the arrest of suspects, the judges and witnesses probably will come under extreme pressure from those elements involved that do not want a prosecution. Moreover, Salvadoran investigative bodies are unlikely to be able to produce acceptable and sufficient physical evidence to satisfy the procedural requirements of the courts. We would expect the security services to give only grudging--and incomplete--cooperation if military officers are involved.

5. The relationship between the judiciary and the military, particularly in a human rights case, has always been difficult. Historically, civilian judicial authority has not extended to the officer corps--even President Duarte, when he assumed office in 1984, chose not to endanger his relations with the military by seeking prosecutions for past crimes. Although lower ranking military personnel are occasionally dismissed from the security services or turned over to the civilian courts for criminal activity--sometimes even for involvement in politically motivated killings--it is customary for officers to steadfastly protect their colleagues and for judges to be hesitant to bring charges. [REDACTED] notes that no officer has been convicted in recent years, despite clear evidence of military involvement in several human rights abuse cases. Officers accused in one incident are now in custody.

6. In addition to manipulation by the military and the political parties, the Salvadoran justice system also is routinely targeted by the guerrillas. The FMLN has announced that it considers justices to be "military targets." Many judges have resigned during the past year in response to direct threats. The assassinations of the Attorney General in April, and of the former President of the Supreme Court in November, were major blows to the legal profession and present strong disincentives for competent individuals to participate in the judicial system. The insurgents have also been known to bribe and intimidate judges and witnesses in cases involving FMLN supporters.

7. Although President Cristiani realizes that a more credible system of criminal justice would enhance international

[REDACTED]

guerrillas. Such pronouncements, however, are likely to be tolerated and even encouraged by the guerrillas because of their propaganda value. [REDACTED]

Q: What is the state of the FMLN's relations with the civilian population and what is the movement's overall strategy?

A: The FMLN's waning popular support at home is its principal vulnerability, in our view. Although the insurgency maintains a following among a small, vocal segment of the urban population and among peasants in areas with a large guerrilla presence, most Salvadorans do not look to the FMLN as a solution to their problems. Indeed, as the guerrillas' prospects for a quick military victory have faded, the FMLN has resorted increasingly to intimidation and outright terror to obtain food, money, and other support from the civilian population. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] indicates that in recent years the FMLN has been responsible for the majority of human rights abuses in El Salvador. Those who defy the guerrillas or who are considered government collaborators--such as mayors, civilian bureaucrats, and, at times, even registered voters--are subject to execution. Between January and August 1988, for example, the insurgents accounted for about two-thirds of the 130 confirmed political killings. That figure does not include civilian deaths--37 during the same period--from insurgent landmines and booby traps. FMLN recruits, many of whom are women and children, often are kidnapped or coerced into the movement, and civilians pay "war taxes" to help defray FMLN expenses. Rural development projects and lightly-armed civil defense units are favored guerrilla targets. [REDACTED]

Strategic Objectives

The FMLN is pursuing a multidimensional strategy--composed of political, military, economic, and diplomatic elements--intended to weaken and de-legitimize the government to the point where it will fall before an insurgent-orchestrated mass insurrection or, at a minimum, be forced into negotiations under terms favorable to the guerrillas. [REDACTED]

Political. The FMLN, using front groups and other organizations sympathetic to its cause, seeks to discredit and undermine the government by creating an atmosphere of popular unrest. The guerrillas orchestrate anti-government demonstrations which often turn violent, because pro-FMLN marchers generally try to provoke security forces into overreacting. The indiscriminate use of urban violence has increased as the FMLN has expanded its operations in San Salvador. Bombings--including the use of car bombs--rocket attacks on public buildings, and machinegun attacks on buses have placed civilians at risk. The guerrillas have also stepped up their attacks on US facilities and officials. [REDACTED]

The guerrillas also operate an effective international propaganda machine, and they work to form low underground cells of supporters. The FMLN, seeing propaganda opportunities and potential for expanding its political organization, has tacitly approved the participation of its political allies in the March 1989 presidential election. Nevertheless, some guerrilla commanders remain, in principle, opposed to elections.

Military. The FMLN's approximately 6,700-7,600 guerrillas generally carry out low-risk, high-visibility actions intended to "bleed" the 57,000-man Salvadoran Army while keeping their own forces intact. The insurgents rely mostly on hit-and-run attacks on isolated outposts, ambushes, sabotage, and terrorism. On occasion, the FMLN will attempt a well-planned and rehearsed attack on a major military target in order to attract media attention and demonstrate its military prowess.

Economic. The FMLN has intensified sabotage and attacks on economic targets during the past year in an effort to heighten its military profile with minimal risk of sustaining casualties. The insurgents also hope to exacerbate the country's persistent economic problems, thereby fueling popular discontent.

Diplomatic. The FMLN--generally operating through its political ally, the FDR--pursues contacts among sympathetic groups in Western Europe and the United States. These groups enhance the legitimacy of the insurgency as well as provide financial support. Key guerrilla leaders currently are visiting various Latin American and other foreign governments in a highly-publicized bid to boost their own legitimacy and rally support for negotiations.

[REDACTED]

MEMORANDUM FOR [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

SUBJECT:

National Police Role in the Investigation of the
Murders of Six Jesuit Priests at the University
of Central America

[REDACTED]

C O R R E C T I O N

1. The following is a corrected version of this sensitive memorandum which was issued originally on 22 December 1989.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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SECRET

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] 20.11.89

3. In mid-November 1989, [REDACTED] said the National Police received orders from the presidential household to conduct a complete and honest investigation of the murders of six Jesuit priests and two other persons which occurred on 16 November 1989 at the University of Central America (UCA). [REDACTED] said senior police officials in turn ordered the National Police detective division to conduct a preliminary investigation of the murders and provide all necessary support to the Special Investigations Unit (SIU) investigation. [REDACTED] senior police officials are committed to solving the murders and bringing the guilty parties to justice, whether they are from the political right or left, or the military.

4. The National Police role has consisted of providing technical support to the SIU, including ballistic comparisons, fingerprint work and routine investigative procedures. [REDACTED] the National Police also conducted a preliminary investigation, which failed to turn up any physical evidence. The information gathered by the National Police investigation corresponded with that obtained by the SIU: the area surrounding the UCA campus was under the control of Salvadoran Armed Forces (ESAF) and security forces personnel; there was no guerrilla activity reported in the immediate area around the UCA on the night of the murders; and there were no abandoned or stolen vehicles left in the area to provide clues as to the authors of the crime.

5. [REDACTED] expressed his opinion that the ESAF was involved in the murders. He said he based this opinion on the fact there was apparently no guerrilla activity in the immediate area around the priests' residence prior to the murders, and that there was a heavy military presence in the area. He added, however, that while many in the National Police suspect ESAF participation in the murders, no proof exists to implicate the military in the crime.

6. This report is being shared with the Ambassador in San Salvador and the Commander-in-Chief of the U.S. Forces Southcom. No further distribution will be made.

[REDACTED]

Deputy Director for Operations

National Intelligence Council

[REDACTED]
8 January 1990

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: PCC Meeting on El Salvador, 29 December 1989

1. Assistant Secretary Aronson initially chaired the meeting, with Ambassador Walker also in attendance. The purpose of the PCC was to explore options for the government of El Salvador to head off domestic and international criticism of its perceived inaction in the face of the recent guerrilla offensive and the murders of the Jesuits. AS Aronson underscored the fact that US assistance to El Salvador will come under strong attack when Congress reconvenes.

2. The discussion focused on measures President Cristiani could take to regain the political initiative. These include the removal of incompetent officers and human rights abusers, an offer of new talks with the insurgents, lifting the state of siege and encouragement of political participation by the non-violent left, and reforms of the legal system. Ambassador Walker noted that he will be pressing Cristiani on all these counts.

3. While D/ALA and I provided some substantive background on the current situation in El Salvador, there was only limited discussion of intelligence issues. ARA Central American Director Sullivan, and others, voiced an interest in more reporting on human rights abuses and the far right.

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] At the conclusion of the meeting, Sullivan stated that he intended to convene a weekly PCC meeting on Central American matters.

[REDACTED]
Assistant National Intelligence Officer
for Latin America

[REDACTED]
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DIRECTORATE OF INTELLIGENCE

26 January 1990

El Salvador: The FMLN After the November 1989 Offensive

Summary

The Marxist Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN) failed to spark a popular insurrection or inflict a crippling blow on the Salvadoran armed forces with its November 1989 offensive, but it did achieve some notable political gains. The intensity and duration of the fighting probably has caused many Salvadorans--particularly the elite, who previously were more insulated from the war--to question the government's ability to provide for their most basic requirement: security. The FMLN leadership, although still divided on the utility of negotiations in the wake of the offensive, probably believes its demonstration of military capabilities will raise doubts internationally about San Salvador's ability to win the war and will translate into greater leverage over the government in any future talks. The rebels also have benefitted from apparent Army complicity in the Jesuit murders, which have damaged San Salvador's credibility and could threaten critical foreign support if the guilty are not brought to justice. [REDACTED]

Militarily, the FMLN emerged from the offensive weakened but not defeated, and apparently has kept many of its regular forces intact. A number of factors--

This memorandum was prepared by [REDACTED]
Office of African and Latin American Analysis.

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[REDACTED]

including the absence of the anticipated popular insurrection, heavy casualties, and shortages of food and medicine--have hurt insurgent morale and contributed to increased desertions. Moreover, the Army's current thrust into rebel strongholds will further hinder FMLN military plans in the near-term. Nonetheless, the insurgents apparently are reevaluating their strategy in light of their political gains, and they retain sufficient forces and arms to maintain military pressure on the government and periodically grab international attention. They are most likely to try to do this through economic sabotage, assassinations, smallscale raids, and harassment rather than another all-out offensive on the same scale as their November effort. [REDACTED]

* * * * *

FMLN Objectives and Motives

Evidence from [REDACTED] indicates the rebel offensive that began on 11 November was a major undertaking that involved months of preparation, including expanding the support infrastructure in the capital, pre-positioning large quantities of munitions, and intensive recruiting. Although the FMLN claimed the offensive was provoked by the death of a leftist labor leader in a 31 October bombing, we believe the operation was an important component of the insurgents' long-term strategy to seize political power, either directly or by forcing the government to make sweeping and destabilizing concessions. Their November action was consistent with the strategic vision outlined in [REDACTED] which predicted that various international and domestic political developments would make 1988-89 the optimum time for pressing an all-out military offensive and inciting a popular insurrection.

[REDACTED] the FMLN believed clandestine political organizing, propaganda activities, and low-risk military operations would generate increased antigovernment sentiment and popular support for an insurrection--to be sparked by the offensive--that would topple the government. [REDACTED]

The FMLN's decision to launch the offensive probably also was motivated by concerns about its declining military and political standing. Steady pressure by government forces on rebel bases during the past year resulted in heavy insurgent casualties. The insurgents' "election offensive" in March 1989--coordinated attacks on military and civilian targets and intensive propagandizing intended to disrupt balloting--was an abject failure, as voters turned out en masse despite rebel calls for a boycott. In addition, the government's rejection of

[REDACTED]

insurgent proposals during peace talks last autumn [REDACTED] hardened the resolve of some commanders to proceed with the attack plan. By late October both the FPL and the ERP--the two dominant FMLN factions--were ready to abandon the talks and proceed with the offensive. [REDACTED]

Rebel leaders also probably felt some urgency to boost the FMLN's image abroad. They almost certainly viewed the sweeping changes in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe as a harbinger of eroding international support for their cause. Indeed, [REDACTED] that Moscow recently had pressed the FMLN to curtail military activities and seek a negotiated settlement instead. [REDACTED]

Despite rebel claims that the offensive was a tactic to gain leverage in future negotiations with the government, there are numerous indications that the FMLN leadership--at least initially--envisioned it as an extraordinary operation that would topple the government. Unlike most insurgent "offensives," which generally consist of coordinated harassment of military targets and economic sabotage, the November action was noteworthy for its scope, intensity, and audacity. The rebels' principal focus was the capital, but they also initiated heavy fighting throughout much of the country, including the departments of Santa Ana, San Miguel, and Usulután. The FMLN employed the majority of its manpower, drawing down forces in its northern bases and maintaining little, if any, effective reserve. Already having intensified forced conscription during the months prior to the offensive, the insurgents further swelled their ranks by impressing civilians once the fighting was underway, [REDACTED] In addition, they pressed some members of their urban front groups into combat. [REDACTED]

Chronology of the Offensive

The offensive began on 11 November, when some 2,000-2,300 rebels launched coordinated attacks, principally in the capital. Attempts to assassinate President Cristiani, Vice President Merino, and the president and vice president of the Legislative Assembly all failed. Similar efforts to kill the military leadership had been preempted a few days earlier when police raided an FMLN safehouse in San Salvador and arrested the plotters. [REDACTED] the insurgents also planned to overrun several key military units--the main Air Force base at Ilopango Airfield, the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 6th Infantry Brigades, the Military Engineers Detachment, and the Arce and Atonal Immediate-Reaction Infantry Battalions--during the initial phase of the offensive. Although fighting around some of these bases was intense, none was captured or destroyed. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

The pace of the fighting slowed when the insurgents withdrew into working class neighborhoods in northern and eastern San Salvador soon after the offensive began. [REDACTED] indicate the FMLN leadership expected working class Salvadorans to rise up and support them. The rebels forced some residents to help them dig in, but many civilians fled during lulls in the fighting. The insurgents' move into the densely populated suburbs also permitted them to use the civilian population as a shield against the government's superior firepower, but the Army, relying principally on infantry forces, succeeded in ousting the rebels within a week. [REDACTED]

The FMLN, however, continued to keep government forces off-balance--and remained in the media spotlight--through a series of bold, unexpected actions, such as the seizure of the Sheraton Hotel. On 29 November, insurgents infiltrated some of San Salvador's affluent western suburbs, where many US officials reside. A US diplomat was temporarily taken hostage and the residence of a senior US official was destroyed. [REDACTED]

Although by early December the Army had pushed the majority of rebel forces out of the capital, large concentrations of insurgents remained poised outside San Salvador and other major cities, threatening a second wave of attacks. The Army, inhibited by exaggerated reports of rebel reinforcements--a concern bolstered by the discovery that Managua had shipped SA-7 surface-to-air missiles to the FMLN--and fixated on the strategic significance of the capital, remained in a largely defensive, reactive posture. US [REDACTED] support eventually encouraged the High Command to dispatch several battalions against the massed insurgents. This campaign has not to date resulted in any dramatic gains, but has forced many insurgents back into hiding and continues to disrupt their plans. [REDACTED]

Results of the Offensive

The rebels' clearest victory was in the war of perceptions. They demonstrated a military prowess that has boosted their credibility and focused international attention on El Salvador. The FMLN probably believes its offensive helped depict the war as "unwinnable," bolstering the argument that US assistance to the government has been ineffective and encouraging additional international pressure on San Salvador to make concessions during future negotiations. [REDACTED]

Government ineptitude and the rebels' own superior propaganda network helped the FMLN in its battle to shape domestic and international opinion. Initial public and international reaction to the offensive was largely negative towards the FMLN. Archbishop Rivera y Damas condemned the [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

attacks, for example, and announced his skepticism towards rebel calls for dialogue. When the government clumsily attempted to censor information about the offensive, however, the FMLN's radio broadcasts became a key source of information for many Salvadorans. As the fighting dragged on, familiar FMLN propaganda themes--most notably charges of indiscriminate bombing by the Air Force--acquired greater currency. While [REDACTED] indicates these allegations were greatly exaggerated, the FMLN recognized the potency of these charges and, according to the defense attache, rebels were observed after some aerial attacks moving bodies to the target areas and spraying buildings with machinegun fire to simulate the effects of indiscriminate strafing. [REDACTED]

The murder of the six Jesuit priests and two women on 16 November marked a critical turning point in international perceptions of the offensive. Attention, particularly in Washington and other foreign capitals, shifted from the insurgent-initiated violence to the murders, which evoked memories of the rampant human rights abuses of the early 1980s and cast the government as ineffectual at best, and, at worst, openly repressive. Insurgent propaganda was able to capitalize further on charges of government repression as a result of searches and arrests directed at churches or religious groups in San Salvador suspected of supporting the FMLN. [REDACTED]

In addition, the offensive altered domestic perceptions about the government's credibility and authority. The rebels' seeming ability to operate with impunity throughout the capital no doubt shook the faith of many Salvadorans--particularly those directly affected by the fighting--in the government's ability to provide for their security. Such a lack of confidence will not only contribute to elite emigration, capital flight, low investment, and other practical problems, but in the long run also could [REDACTED] undermine the democratic process and hinder efforts to build a political consensus. [REDACTED]

Despite these gains, the FMLN also suffered some important political and military setbacks. Salvadorans' failure to rise up in a popular insurrection or to voluntarily support the rebels in any significant numbers indicates the FMLN's popular support is not broad enough to pose a serious political challenge to the government. The exposure of many urban front group members--both by participating in combat and through information provided by [REDACTED]--probably has, for the time being, crippled the FMLN's political apparatus in the capital. The insurgents emerged from the offensive weakened by heavy casualties--the Salvadoran Army claims some 1,600 rebels killed and over 1,000 wounded, compared to about 500 killed and 1,300 wounded for the government--as well as poor morale and desertions. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

The FMLN's military losses may be offset somewhat by other factors, however. Most casualties appear to have been poorly-trained urban commandos and new recruits rather than regular insurgent forces, and renewed forced recruitment already has helped offset these losses. [REDACTED] In addition, the insurgents appear to have sufficient arms and munitions to continue operations, and, [REDACTED] Havana has agreed to increase supply shipments [REDACTED]

Outlook

Despite the offensive's military shortcomings, the FMLN leadership recognizes the potential for exploiting its political gains and appears already to have reevaluated its strategy. In the next few months, the insurgents probably will emphasize negotiations coupled with military actions, such as sabotage, ambushes, harassment, and assassinations. Rebel success in assassinating a key official--such as President Cristiani or Chief of Staff Ponce--could dramatically weaken public confidence in the government and promote greater political instability. [REDACTED]

While a second largescale offensive cannot be ruled out, most rebel commanders probably now see their military objective as an adjunct to a political solution rather than a decisive defeat of government forces. Cuba and Nicaragua aside, most of the FMLN's foreign patrons--citing the offensive's military shortcomings--probably will encourage them to pursue a negotiated settlement. Nonetheless, the rebels no doubt believe continued military activity--particularly high profile actions in the capital--is necessary to strengthen their bargaining position. If they employed sufficient numbers of their recently acquired SA-7 surface-to-air missiles--and achieved a greater degree of accuracy than demonstrated thus far--the rebels may even attempt to assault a major military base. [REDACTED]

Talks are unlikely to yield tangible results until one side either alters its key objective or opts to make dramatic concessions--both unlikely developments in the near term, in our view. There is no evidence to indicate that the FMLN has altered its view of negotiations as a tactical device to undermine Washington's and San Salvador's resolve and to boost its own international credibility. Meanwhile, at least one senior rebel commander reportedly still favors an exclusively military strategy and may mount independent operations. [REDACTED]

National Intelligence Council

[REDACTED]
2 March 1990

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence
Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

VIA: National Intelligence Officer for Warning

FROM: [REDACTED]
National Intelligence Officer for
Latin America

SUBJECT: Latin America Warning and Forecast Meeting
February 1990

1. The Latin American Warning and Forecast Meeting took place on 27 February 1990. Intelligence Community representatives reached the following major conclusions:

--

[REDACTED]

--

In El Salvador - The guerrillas have largely regained their preoffensive combat strength and capabilities and have the capacity to prolong the war at current levels. Nicaraguan and Cuban support for the rebels appeared to continue at high maintenance levels in January and February. While Ortega's defeat will disrupt supplies and psychologically deflate the guerrillas, the Sandinistas may surge deliveries during their remaining 60 days in power and Cuba can probably find alternative mechanisms to maintain overall materiel flows.

--

[REDACTED]

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~~SECRET~~

SUBJECT: Latin America Warning and Forecast Meeting
February 1990

3. El Salvador

Intelligence Community analysts do not expect another major FMLN offensive in the next few months. The insurgents have made good their losses from the November 1989 offensive and appear to be receiving a steady stream of weapons and supplies from Nicaragua--seaborne arms deliveries have been very high in January and February. However, their urban infrastructure remains disrupted and the level of training of their new recruits is low. While there has been an increase in the pace of FMLN military actions--mining, low-level ambushes, attacks against economic targets--the overall focus over the next few months is likely to be on political and diplomatic initiatives to influence a decision in the US Congress on aid to El Salvador.

So for this year, there had been no evident decline in the commitment of the Cubans or Sandinistas to support the FMLN. The new situation in Nicaragua will complicate and disrupt the guerrillas' primary supply conduit, but may not lead to a dramatic downturn in overall guerrilla resupply. Cuba will make greater use of other routes to supply the insurgents and even after the new Nicaraguan government has taken power will be able to make some clandestine use of Nicaraguan territory--much as it has in Honduras and Guatemala. During the remaining two months in power, the Sandinistas may surge deliveries to provide the FMLN some greater stockpiles.

Prospects for a negotiated settlement have not dramatically changed with talks between the government and guerrillas making only slow progress. The Nicaraguan election may cause some elements within the FMLN to regard negotiations more seriously, but it is likely at the same

[REDACTED]

SUBJECT: Latin America Warning and Forecast Meeting
February 1990

time to strengthen the resolve of those in the FMLN who have supported a military solution to the conflict. This may make it more difficult for the FMLN to settle on a coherent policy toward talks with the government--raising the possibility of a split in FMLN ranks.

The government, meanwhile, appears to be continuing to seriously investigate the Jesuit murders case, but there is a good possibility that it could stretch on for months or even years. President Cristiani and the senior armed forces leadership are likely to continue to press for a resolution of the case, even if it leads to a conviction of Colonel Benavides--alleged to be the author of the killings. Their commitment would come into question, however, were a more senior member of the military high command or Roberto D'Aubuisson to be implicated. Analysts doubt, for example, that Cristiani would be willing to pursue a case against D'Aubuisson. An additional scenario fraught with difficulties would be the exoneration of Benavides but the conviction of the lieutenants involved in the murders. This would sharpen generational tensions in the armed forces and perhaps even provoke open protest or rebellion by junior officers.

Warning Issue

The guerrillas have largely regained their pre-offensive combat strength and will have the capability to prolong the war at current levels. The Jesuit murders case is not likely to be resolved quickly, and its ambiguities will have considerable potential to undermine the international credibility of the Cristiani government and to foster increased internal political tensions.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

12 March 1990

MEMORANDUM

alt
SUBJECT: El Salvador: Update on Jesuit Killings. #4

1. The investigation of the Jesuit killings appears to have slowed in recent weeks, with Judge Zamora and the prosecutors not aggressively collecting and evaluating evidence against the nine suspects. [REDACTED] Zamora has been reluctant to petition the Honor Commission for its findings or the Special Investigations Unit (SIU) Chief Colonel Rivas for information relevant to the case, including an alleged diary or notebook kept by Colonel Benavides.¹ Although Zamora has complained [REDACTED] that the police are not bringing forward potential witnesses, he apparently has not protested to the police director, stating instead that the Army already is aware of the problem and should resolve it. Last week, President Cristiani [REDACTED] [REDACTED] called Zamora, provided him with the names of the Honor Commission members, and told him to move quickly. Zamora reportedly is planning to interview the members of the Honor Commission, and continues to take testimony from three to four potential witnesses daily. [REDACTED] there are some 180 such individuals to be interviewed. [REDACTED]

1. Zamora privately told [REDACTED] officials that he has not asked for Benavides' diary because he believes it will exonerate the Colonel, who has been charged with ordering the killings. The judge believes it is more appropriate for the defense attorneys to obtain the notebook, if it exists. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

2. Meanwhile, rumors concerning the case continue to circulate. Regarding the widely published allegation that Colonel Benavides is receiving special privileges, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Colonel's wife [REDACTED] denied that her husband had visited a beach resort owned by the military pension fund. While acknowledging that Benavides receives visitors, she categorically stated that he has not left his place of detention, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] rumors of Benavides' beach trip remain unconfirmed. On 9 March, Judge Zamora denied press rumors that an assassination attempt had been made against him. [REDACTED]

3. In another unconfirmed rumor, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] the ninth suspect in the Jesuit case--an enlisted man who deserted immediately after the killings--will surface soon in Mexico, where he will admit to his involvement and possibly implicate more senior officers. The suspect is expected to allege that during the operation he heard Lieutenant Espinoza--who is accused of issuing the order to shoot--talk repeatedly by radio with Vice Minister of Defense Colonel Zepeda. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

8 May 1990

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: El Salvador: Update on the Jesuit Killings, #5

1. Almost five months after the slaying of six Jesuit priests, their cook, and her daughter on 16 November, the investigation appears to be at a standstill. Although the initial inquiry--conducted with substantial foreign assistance and oversight--yielded sufficient evidence to charge nine soldiers with the crimes, we judge that subsequent stages have suffered from a lack of aggressiveness on the part of the government's investigative bodies, especially Judge Zamora, who is responsible for spearheading and coordinating the investigation. [REDACTED] Zamora has done little to solicit information to build a stronger case against Colonel Benavides and the eight other suspects. He has met only once--on 16 March, four months after the killings--with the director of the Special Investigations Unit (SIU) to discuss the case. Despite assurances from senior government officials that they would expand the inquiry, Zamora only last week followed up on the promise he had made in March to call on the members of the military's Honor Commission--established to conduct an internal investigation--to testify before him. Moreover, the judge has not yet interviewed any of the officers who attended the military commanders' meeting--at which Benavides was present and during which the problem of "hitting the guerrilla leadership" was discussed--on the night of the killings. [REDACTED]

2. The government's handling of the case has renewed charges that the military is covering up higher level involvement and has raised doubts about the government's commitment to resolving the case. Former Army Colonel Ochoa, now an ARENA legislative deputy, alleged that senior officers other than Colonel Benavides probably were involved in the Jesuit murder during a 22 April segment on CBS' "60 Minutes." Specifically, Ochoa attempted to give credence to rumors that the Vice Minister of Defense, Colonel Zepeda, was involved in the decision to kill the priests or at least was informed immediately of the act. Although [REDACTED] Zepeda had no command over tactical units and was not in the chain of command on the night

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[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

SUBJECT: El Salvador: Update on the Jesuit Killings, #5

of the killings, rumors of his involvement persist. Nonetheless, Zamora says he will not investigate such allegations unless requested by the Attorney General or the SIU. [REDACTED] Zepeda has offered to testify in court, but Zamora has not yet interviewed him. [REDACTED]

3. Further fueling speculation of a military cover-up was the announcement on 7 May by judicial authorities that a notebook or diary allegedly kept by Benavides and recently requested by the judge as evidence has disappeared. Zamora privately told [REDACTED] officials in March that he had not asked for Benavides' diary because he believed it would exonerate the colonel. Four potential military witnesses to the crime, moreover, reportedly are abroad for training and are unavailable to testify until later this month. In addition, the head of the military Honor Commission now claims the group kept no records and did not prepare a written report. The apparent reluctance of officers to come forward on their own with relevant information suggests that the military is doing the minimum required to cooperate with the judicial authorities. [REDACTED]

4. Ochoa's allegations coincided with other events viewed by the Salvadoran Armed Forces as unfavorable to their interests. A recent move in the US Congress to cut US military aid to El Salvador by 50 percent and the widespread publicity of the "Speaker's Task Force on El Salvador" report, which criticizes the government's investigation, caused a stir in military circles. Armed Forces spokesmen publicly denounced Ochoa's statements and insisted that he turn over any evidence to the judicial authorities. Privately, many senior civilian and military officials are urging Ochoa's ouster as head of the government-controlled electricity board. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Colonel Zepeda may try to revoke Ochoa's pension as a retired officer and dismiss him from the rolls of inactive reserve. [REDACTED]

5. President Cristiani has criticized the proposed US aid cuts, saying such a move would undermine his government's efforts to negotiate a peaceful settlement with the guerrillas. Cristiani did not refute the Speaker's report, which faulted the government for not delving into the possibility that individuals other than Benavides may have ordered the killings and pointed to a possible cover-up. Nevertheless, the President has expressed his doubts that Benavides will be convicted, given the legal constraints on the use of evidence. Cristiani did say late last month, however, that he hopes the case will be tried within 90 days. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

SUBJECT: El Salvador: Update on the Jesuit Killings, #5

6. [REDACTED] The case will not come to trial anytime soon unless new evidence is uncovered or witnesses come forward. Even when it does, Judge Zamora probably will have difficulty finding jurors willing to serve, as is common in even the most simple trials in El Salvador. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

22 May 1990

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

FROM: [REDACTED]

SUBJECT:

Social Evening
In Guatemala City

From 16 to 19 May, I was TDY [REDACTED] to attend an Arms Interdiction Meeting. Following the termination of the meeting, I was invited on 18 May [REDACTED] to attend a dinner party at her home. [REDACTED] her husband, is currently on contract with the Agency for International Development in El Salvador; putting in a computer system. [REDACTED] returns to Guatemala for the weekends as they consider El Salvador too dangerous a place to live.

[REDACTED]

Generally, the conversation was social although the following topics were of interest:

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d. [redacted] believes that Salvadoran [redacted] noted that [redacted] on being [redacted] consistent [redacted] at [redacted] he ordered [redacted] at San Salvador [redacted] in [redacted] the [redacted] the President [redacted] and both the [redacted] startled when [redacted] anything about [redacted] result of the [redacted] lot the case [redacted] as found [redacted] same manner [redacted] killed [redacted] for the enemy [redacted] general will ever [redacted] friendship with Roberto D'Aubuisson.

[REDACTED]

31 May 1990

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: El Salvador: Update on the Jesuit Killings, #6

1. The ongoing investigation into the murders of six Jesuits last November has produced a case study of endemic problems in the Salvadoran judicial system and of the tenor of civilian-military relations in El Salvador. Delays, lack of coordination, and poor communication between civilian and military authorities continue to impede progress on the case. [REDACTED] indicates that Judge Zamora and Special Investigative Unit (SIU) director Colonel Rivas--who met once in mid-March at the urging of [REDACTED]--have reached an impasse. Rivas refuses to meet in the judge's chambers, and Zamora has refused to meet with Rivas elsewhere. Zamora still is reluctant to make requests of, or give specific orders to, the SIU; [REDACTED] he argues that a judge in El Salvador does not give orders to the military. As of 13 May, for example, the judge still had not asked the SIU or the military for a list of officers present at a commanders' meeting held only a few hours before the murders. [REDACTED]

2. In a probable effort to improve its image and demonstrate its willingness to cooperate with the investigation, the Army announced that all requests for information from the military should be passed through the Minister of Defense to streamline the process and avoid confusion. Zamora [REDACTED] has agreed, [REDACTED]

3. Problems also abound among the civilians responsible for pursuing the case. Zamora, assigned in January to the pre-trial investigative phase, has dragged his feet throughout, taking action only when prodded by [REDACTED] the President's office. Zamora recently has been given additional duties, unrelated to the Jesuit case, that are expected to limit further the time he spends on the inquiry. Meanwhile, sources in the Attorney General's office told [REDACTED] that no one there is responsible for managing the case or for devising a prosecutorial strategy. Attorney General Mauricio Colorado himself, moreover, has told the eight prosecutors assigned to the case to take no initiatives, [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

SUBJECT: El Salvador: Update on the Jesuit Killings. #6

4. Zamora complains that conflicting evidence has confused him, and he seems at a loss to sort out the contradictions. For example, three members of a military Honor Commission, appointed by the President to investigate Armed Forces involvement in the murders, testified this month that the commission had submitted a written report to President Cristiani, while other members have sworn that no such report was ever prepared. In addition, the four cadets who the SIU reported were on guard at the military school the night of the murders--and, thus, would have been able to identify the soldiers who left the academy--have now testified that they were not on duty that night. [REDACTED]

5. Meanwhile, a decision in another human rights trial may have serious consequences for the Jesuit case. In the other trial, the court ruled inadmissible any evidence collected by the SIU on the grounds that the unit is not an auxiliary organ of the court. The SIU collected virtually all the physical evidence in the Jesuit case--including ballistics and fingerprints--on which the charges against the soldiers are based. [REDACTED]

6. The 120-day investigative stage of the judicial proceedings ended on 22 May, but the judge can, at his discretion, extend it. Both the judge and President Cristiani say they do not expect a trial to begin until August. [REDACTED] believes, however, that there is neither sufficient, judicially acceptable evidence to convict Col. Benavides--the highest ranked officer charged--or to quiet suspicion of even higher-level military involvement. As a result of the lack of significant progress, the case is increasingly being played out in the media rather than in the courtroom. Many junior officers, according to US Embassy and defense attache reports, believe their superiors are setting the stage for Benavides' eventual release, leaving the more junior officers who have been charged to pay for the crime. [REDACTED]



Reference ID: A7676

28 June 1990

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Secretary Cheney's Question Concerning Political Killings in El Salvador

1. We rely on data provided by [REDACTED] for our analysis of the level of political violence in El Salvador. While [REDACTED] does not claim that its numbers are precise, or an accounting of all violent events, [REDACTED] the data do provide an accurate indication of the trends. [REDACTED] is the only source of statistics on political killings in El Salvador that has maintained a consistent methodology since 1980. For example, [REDACTED] data show that the monthly average has declined from almost 800 political killings in 1980 to fewer than 20 beginning in 1987. [REDACTED]

2. The Methodology. [REDACTED] is based on accounts of violence in the Salvadoran press, guerrilla reporting of violent incidents in their own media, and other publicly available sources. Categorizing a death as a "political" killing is based on the [REDACTED] of the evidence and whether a political motive exists. [REDACTED]

3. Suspicious Killings. [REDACTED] also tracks killings when there is no clear political motive but such a motive cannot be ruled out. These "suspicious" killings have tended to remain steady at about 20 per month for the past three years. The [REDACTED] estimates that about half the incidents in this category probably are ordinary criminal killings. [REDACTED]

Information was prepared by [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Office of African and Latin American Analysis.

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[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
1 October 1990

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Briefing for SSCI Staffer on El Salvador
and Honduras

1. On 1 October 1990 at 1500 hours in 4F29 OHB, SSCI staffer Jim Currie received a briefing from DI/ALA analysts on El Salvador and Honduras. Present for the Agency were: [REDACTED] Central America Branch Chief; [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] political analysts on Honduras; [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] political analysts on El Salvador; and [REDACTED] from OCA. The briefing was part of a series being offered to Currie as part of his SSCI responsibility for Latin American political affairs. Currie took detailed notes and asked few questions. The meeting was held at the Top Secret Codeword level, although a vast majority of the material was Secret

[REDACTED]

3. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] painted an equally troubling picture for El Salvador. While the FMLN was not a large radical force, they were well armed with sufficient caches to survive long term cut backs in support by the Cubans and the Sandanistas. The government was preoccupied with its internal economic problems as well as attempting to unravel the legal troubles surrounding the murder of the Jesuit priests last year. Currie noted for the analysts the current status of the Dodd Amendment which would cut aid to El Salvador by half and suggested it would likely pass a US Congress tired of the mess in El Salvador.

[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

4. The meeting ended at 1730. No immediate follow up briefing was requested though Currie queried about doing more of the same type on different countries in Latin America once Congress adjourned. [REDACTED] promised he would follow up as requested and per Currie's schedule.

[REDACTED]

Senate Liaison

Distribution:

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

30 November 1990

MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Update on the Jesuit Killings

1. Despite continual prodding from US officials, the investigation into the Jesuit murder has progressed little since last June. [REDACTED] indicates that neither President Cristiani's appearance before Judge Zamora in September, nor the testimony of some senior officers have eased suspicions that the decision to kill the priests was made by the top levels of the military. Contradictory testimony by military personnel, the disappearance of key evidence, and the reluctance of senior officers to volunteer information bolsters these suspicions.

[REDACTED]

2. Further clouding the government's record is the promotion in September of Col. Ponce to Defense Minister. The possibility of his implication in the decision to kill the Jesuits or the subsequent apparent cover-up has made it difficult for Cristiani to prove his government's willingness to punish all those responsible. [REDACTED] no evidence of Ponce's direct involvement in the murders, but he has, at a minimum, acquiesced in the cover-up, [REDACTED]

3. In the wake of Congressional conditions placed on US military aid to El Salvador, senior military officials appear to be searching for a way out of the impasse.* [REDACTED] indicates that the High Command now appears ready to consider allowing the court to drop charges

* In November the United States suspended half of the \$85 million FY91 military assistance and Congress placed conditions on the release of the second half. The remaining \$42.5 million could be slashed if the government--especially the Army--fails to demonstrate to the Congress by 5 January 1991, real progress in finding and punishing those responsible. President Bush must certify that progress has been made. [REDACTED]

14 December 1990

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence
Deputy Director of Central Intelligence

FROM: [REDACTED]
National Intelligence Officer for Latin America

SUBJECT: El Salvador Certification

1. On 13 December I organized an Intelligence Community briefing on El Salvador at the request of Assistant Secretaries of State Bernard Aronson and Janet Mullins. I was joined by Assistant NIO [REDACTED] (ALA/MCD), [REDACTED] (Defense Intelligence Officer for Latin America), [REDACTED] (INR.) All of us, except [REDACTED] made presentations on specific issues relating to presidential certification on El Salvador with respect to US military assistance. [REDACTED]

2. Deputy Assistant Secretary Joseph Sullivan chaired for Aronson. He was joined during the first portion of the session by State Department attorneys and Central America desk officers. A restricted meeting [REDACTED] followed. It was limited to the Intelligence Community briefers and Sullivan and Roberta Jacobson (Aronson's executive assistant.) [REDACTED]

3. H.R. 5114--which reduced military assistance to El Salvador by one half--requires that the President "determine and report in writing to Congress" in early January and again in early July, 1991 on two sets of issues. [REDACTED]

4. With respect to the FMLN, the legislation provides that sequestered military assistance may be reinstated if the guerrillas are receiving "significant shipments of lethal military assistance from outside;" are "assassinating or abducting civilian noncombatants;" or "refusing to negotiate a

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

SUBJECT: El Salvador Certification

5. With respect to the behavior of the Salvadoran government and military, the legislation provides in particular, that no military assistance may be provided if: 1) the government "has failed to conduct a thorough and professional investigation" of the Jesuit murders, or; 2) the military "are assassinating or abducting civilian noncombatants."

6. Discussion on these two issues was restricted as described above. [REDACTED] briefed on the Jesuit case, pointing out positive aspects of the investigation and prosecution of the case. [REDACTED] also indicated that contradictory testimony by Salvadoran military personnel, the disappearance of evidence, and the reluctance of senior officers to volunteer information bolsters suspicions that the decision to kill the priests was made at a high level. [REDACTED] pointed out that the armed forces have made no attempt to launch a serious internal investigation of the incident.

7. After prior consultations with the chief and [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] I briefed on several [REDACTED] reports. They include specific allegations of assassinations and abuses by Salvadoran military officers. I indicated that [REDACTED] analysts who have seen the reports generally find them credible. I also emphasized that the reports are unconfirmed, and that the two most relevant [REDACTED] are from the same source and sub-source. Sullivan indicated that he would like to be able to convey the core of information about these reported abuses to Salvadoran

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

SUBJECT: El Salvador Certification

President Cristiani and Defense Minister Ponce. He will consult with the [REDACTED] Division. Sullivan did not request any additional intelligence support with respect to these issues.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

National Intelligence Council

21 January 1991

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: PCC on El Salvador

1. Assistant Secretary of State (ARA) Bernard Aronson chaired a PCC on El Salvador on 22 January to discuss possible US initiatives in the aftermath of the recent executions of two US servicemen by FMLN guerrillas. [REDACTED] also participated.

2. Initially, there was a brief discussion of what public relations strategy should be pursued to inform Congress and the public about the executions. This was followed by an extended discussion about how and whether the guerrillas responsible for the murders could be brought to justice in the United States and whether conspiracy charges could be brought against the FMLN leadership. The Justice representative emphasized that they are still waiting for the results of the murder investigation that was done in El Salvador and for other written reports. He said there is an extra-territorial principle with respect to jurisdiction that would apply, assuming that a prosecutable case could be assembled. He expressed reservations, however, about the availability of witnesses and adequate evidence. He emphasized that Justice has no position yet about whether it would be better to try the executioners in the United States or in El Salvador.

3. In the only part of this discussion relevant to foreign intelligence responsibilities, the Justice Department representative requested that any information available to the Intelligence Community about higher-level FMLN involvement or approval of the murders be shared promptly with Justice.

4. The third major item on the agenda focused on State's desire to retaliate against the murders by shutting down FMLN

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[REDACTED]

SUBJECT: PCC on El Salvador

offices in the United States and to reduce the effectiveness of FMLN front groups abroad. State has sought Intelligence Community support with respect to the front groups but I have emphasized that this is a matter for the FBI and not for the foreign intelligence community. I told Aronson and his Deputy for Central America Joseph Sullivan that [REDACTED] available to us about FMLN contacts with, or dependence on, front groups outside of El Salvador.

National Intelligence Officer
for Latin America

Handwritten signature

[REDACTED] 5
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
18 July 1991

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Briefing for HPSCI Staffer Dupart on Nicaragua,
El Salvador, and Cuba

1. On 18 July 1991, at 0830 hours, in room 4X48 New Headquarters Building, Louis Dupart, House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence staff, received a briefing on Nicaragua, El Salvador, and Cuba. Agency participants were: [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. Also in attendance was the undersigned. (C)
2. The first portion of the briefing focused on Cuba, with a great emphasis on its economic shortfalls. Also discussed were the amount of support to the FMLN from Cuba and the 1 February demarche that ceased all material assistance and training. The briefers indicated that there is confirmation that the Cuban's have instructed the FMLN to leave Cuba, but there is no evidence that they are kicking them out. Mr. Dupart brought up the SA-16 issue. [REDACTED] said that the Agency, and perhaps the NIC, would be producing a paper within the near future in hopes of better defining the analysis available, but at this time there is no intelligence that would finger the Cubans in supplying the FLMN with SA-16's. (S)
3. The last portion of the briefing was a brief discussion on the Jesuit Priest case in El Salvador and a very brief discussion on the political situation in Nicaragua. (C)
4. The entire briefing lasted approximately 60 minutes and there were no outstanding questions. (U)

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
House Division
Office of Congressional Affairs

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NOV 1993

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] HK

20 November 1991

SUBJECT: The Jesuit Case

- On 15 November 1989 members of the Salvadoran Armed Forces High command met at the Armed Forces Headquarters to discuss strategy during the ongoing FMLN offensive; some evidence suggests they may have held two meetings.
 - On the early morning of 16 November 1989 members of the Atlacatl Battalion, under the operational control of Colonel Guillermo Benavides, entered the campus of the University of Central America in San Salvador and allegedly killed six Jesuit priests, their housekeeper and the housekeeper's daughter.
 - In mid-December 1989, prosecutors in the Attorney General's office began questioning soldiers.
 - In January 1990 President Cristiani announced the Special Investigative Unit (SIU) had developed evidence implicating men in the Atlacatl Battalion in the murders. Evidence included ballistics data and testimonies from at least three soldiers who said Benavides ordered them to kill the Jesuits. On 12 January the government arrested eight suspects; an additional suspect had deserted in December and remains at large. Judge Zamora, assigned soon after the murders to oversee the investigation, ruled that enough evidence existed to hold the suspects, who were ruled ineligible for bail.
 - In June 1990 Judge Zamora ordered the arrest of Lt. Col. Camilo Hernandez for burning log books wanted as evidence. (Some 70 military logbooks were destroyed weeks after the killings, an estimated 20 of which reportedly may have given evidence relevant to the case.)
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

- On 2 September 1990 President Cristiani testified in court that no mention was made of the Jesuits at the High Command meeting on the night before the murders.

- On 10 December 1990 Judge Zamora raised the case to plenary, ending the investigation.

- On September 28, 1991 a San Salvador jury convicted Colonel Benavides for the murder of the priests and the housekeeper and her daughter. Lieutenant Yussai Mendoza, assigned to the military academy under Benavides' command, was convicted on a single count of murder for the death of the housekeeper's daughter. An additional two officers and the enlisted men were found not guilty. Charges of conspiracy are still pending against the officers.

- The conviction of Benavides was the first time a senior Salvadoran officer has been convicted of a human rights violation.

- Military testimony has never established the precise chain of command between Minister of Defense Ponce and Colonel Benavides on the night of the murders and has failed to clarify doubts about a possible coverup.

[REDACTED]

- The "intellectual authorship" of the murders has not been established and reporting is conflicting on the chronology of events surrounding the murders. Some reporting suggests that Ponce may have been part of a coverup and may have defied Cristiani's orders to turn all evidence over to the courts. One version of the complicated sequence of events prior to the murders and implication that Ponce was somehow involved in the events was the subject of a memorandum dissemination of June 1990.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

27 November 1991

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

FROM: [REDACTED]

SUBJECT: HPSCI Staff Briefing on Reporting Related to the Murder
of the Jesuit Priests in El Salvador

1. On 21 November 1991 at 1330 hours HPSCI staffers Dick Giza, Louie Dupart, Chris Healey, Mike Sheehy, Mike O'Neil and Tom Smeeton received a briefing from [REDACTED] Chief/LA, [REDACTED] on [REDACTED] the murder of the Jesuit priests in El Salvador.

2. Chief/LA said that there were two memo dissem reports, one dated 29 June 1990 and the other 18 June 1991, that provided information on the Jesuit priests murders. The first report is a chronology of events surrounding the murders and Chief/LA provided a detailed briefing [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Chief/LA pointed out that Rep. Moakley's report mentions unmarked uniforms being distributed to the soldiers [REDACTED]

3. [REDACTED] Mr. Dupart asked if [REDACTED] had been able to confirm that a meeting of several high ranking officers had indeed taken place at the school on 15 November at 1400 hours. [REDACTED] responded negatively. Dupart: Had Deputy Commander Carlos Camilo Hernandez destroyed the log books at the school used to record arrivals and departures for that day? [REDACTED] Yes.

4. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

SUBJECT: HPSCI Staff Briefing on Reporting Related to the
Murder of the Jesuit Priests in El Salvador

[REDACTED]

5. [REDACTED] following the murders, a task force was established at the Embassy to follow every lead that came to its attention. This group met twice a week and reported its findings back to Washington via the Embassy. [REDACTED] these two reports were the only ones that indicated possible involvement by higher authorities within the government. However, [REDACTED] have been unable to collect any reliable information that indicts these higher authorities and it is not impossible that Benavides acted on his own. [REDACTED] who in the Embassy would have seen these memo dissemi and was told Ambassador Walker and the task force. [REDACTED] Rep. Moakley's paper claims that there was a cover-up and the response was that there was no doubt that the military could have found out immediately about the murders, however there is no information to prove it.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] (27 November 1991)

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

6 FEBRUARY 1990
OFA 0306 90

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Briefing on Central America for Lee H. Hamilton,
HFAC Member

1. On 6 February 1990, between 1500 and 1545 hours, in Room 2187 Rayburn House Office Building, HFAC Member Lee H. Hamilton (D/IN) received a briefing on Central America. The briefing was at the secret level.

2. [REDACTED] Chief, ALA (Middle America/Cuba), supported by [REDACTED] also of ALA, focused their remarks on Nicaragua, El Salvador, Guatemala and Honduras, and briefly covered Costa Rica. [REDACTED] OCA, was also present.

3. Mr. Hamilton exhibited a solid background knowledge of the dynamics of the political, military and economic situation of these countries and frequently interrupted the briefers with specific questions. He appeared to be particularly interested in the status of upcoming elections in each country--background and political leanings of the candidates, plans for election observers, probable winners, etc.

[REDACTED] The discussion on El Salvador covered the Jesuit priests' murder and prompted Mr. Hamilton to ask about the judicial system in that country.

4. The briefers were hard pressed to keep up with Mr. Hamilton's questions but they did so admirably. His questions were rapid and wide ranging in nature and both analysts were able to respond quickly and thoroughly. As a result, there were no outstanding issues to be followed up.

5. Mr. Hamilton expressed his appreciation for the briefing and noted that he would be requesting similar sessions in the future on a variety of issues. As OCA is aware, Mike Van Dusen had requested a weekly (intelligence) briefing for Mr. Hamilton which was turned down. While we may not hear from

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[REDACTED]

SUBJECT: Briefing on Central America for Lee H. Hamilton,
HFAC Member

him on a weekly basis, we probably can anticipate fairly regular requests for updates. If he is as knowledgeable on other issues as he appeared to be at this session, the sessions will be substantive and fast moving and briefers should be prepared to deviate from prepared/written texts to answer his questions.

[REDACTED]

House Liaison
Office of Congressional Affairs

Distribution:

[REDACTED]

7-89

COMMITTEE STAFF VISIT TO EL SALVADOR

25 December 1989
OCA 4277-89

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chief, Operations Resources Management Staff

FROM: [REDACTED]
Deputy Director, House Affairs,
Office of Congressional Affairs

SUBJECT: Special Committee Staff Visit to El Salvador

1. Speaker Foley has established a 17-Member Special Committee to investigate the 16 November 1989 murders of six Jesuit Priests and two women in San Salvador. On 8, 9, and 10 January the following staff designees to this Committee will be leaving San Salvador in preparation for a Member trip scheduled for late-January or early-February 1990.

2. Mike O'Neil from Speaker Foley's office will head the staff. Dick Cize (HPSCI), Louis Dupart (Minority staff member of HPSCI), Vic Johnson (Staff Director of House Foreign Affairs Committee, Western Hemisphere Subcommittee), Bill Woodward (Staff Director, Fisheries and Wildlife Subcommittee on Conservation and Environment) and Jim McGovern (from Representative Joe Moakley's, (D., MA), personal staff; Moakley is Chairman of the Special Committee).

3. A lengthy cable through Department channels is on the way.

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21 November 1989
OCA 4324-89

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Briefing for HPSCI Members Beilenson, Glickman, and McHugh Regarding Nicaragua and El Salvador

1. On 21 November 1989, at 1600 hours, in room H-405 the Capitol, Representatives Anthony Beilenson (D., CA); Dan Glickman (D., KS); and Mathew McHugh (D., NY); House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence Members, received an updated briefing on Nicaragua and El Salvador. HPSCI staff participants were: Thomas Latimer and Richard Giza. Agency participants were: [REDACTED] Deputy Director for Operations; [REDACTED] Latin American Division, Directorate of Operations; [REDACTED] Deputy Director, House Liaison, Office of Congressional Affairs, and the undersigned. (C)

2. The briefing was already in progress when the undersigned and [REDACTED] arrived. Topics of interest discussed were: upcoming elections in Nicaragua--how we must lean on the Sandinistas to have free and fair elections; how the Yamales collect intelligence on the contras; infiltration of the contras from Nicaragua back into Honduras; how the Resistance said they would not sign a piece of paper for their demobilization; Human Rights issues; the 55 man limit on military advisers in El Salvador; and the Jesuit Priest incident and the likelihood we will ever know who exactly did the killing. (S)

3. This was a very informal briefing between the Members and the Agency participants. All three Members talked about their frustration on the Hill with the situation in both of these countries, and throughout Latin America. Everyone agreed that no one in the Administration can see an end to these wars. There were no outstanding questions and the session lasted approximately one and one half hours. (U)

[REDACTED]
House Liaison
Office of Congressional Affairs

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[REDACTED] 5

OCA 89-3999
17 November 1989

Amel

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Briefing for Representatives Frank McCloskey (D., IN);
Barbara Boxer (D., CA); and Nancy Pelosi (D., CA) re
El Salvador

1. On 17 November 1989 at 1500 hours, in room 127 Cannon House Office Building, Representatives McCloskey, Boxer, and Pelosi, received a briefing regarding the most recent developments in El Salvador. Also in attendance was Paul Weber, Representative McCloskey's staffer, who holds a valid TS clearance. Agency participants were: [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] African and Latin American Analysis, Directorate of Intelligence, and the undersigned. (U)

2. [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] gave a quick run-down of recent events in El Salvador. All three Members were interested in any information obtained regarding the recent killing of the five Jesuit Priests. They seemed to be comparing it to the information they had obtained from State Department following the incident. Both briefers emphasized that the information was still sketchy and that State Department was the better informed Agency regarding the entire matter. (U)

3. [REDACTED] did briefly talk about the overall military situation in El Salvador, with all three Members asking several good questions. (U)

4. There were no outstanding questions and the briefing lasted approximately one half hour. (U)

[REDACTED]
House Liaison
Office of Congressional Affairs

Distribution:
Orig: [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

OLL 84-0443
26 January 1984

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Briefing of the House Permanent Select
Committee on Intelligence (HPSCI) Staff
[REDACTED]

1. Today, HPSCI staffers were briefed on the above subject by our Agency representatives. Following are lists of the HPSCI staffers and our briefers.

a. HPSCI staffers

Thomas K. Latimer, Staff Director
Michael O'Neil
James Bush
Steven Berry

Bernie Raimo
Richard Giza
David Addington

b. CIA personnel

[REDACTED] C/LA/DDO
[REDACTED] O/Compt
[REDACTED], DC/IAD/SAG/DDO
[REDACTED] LD/OLL

2. The purpose of this briefing was to provide the HPSCI staff with an overview of the activities [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] This session would also serve as a prebrief for a hearing in front of the full Committee scheduled for 0930, 31 January 1984. [REDACTED]

ALL PORTIONS OF THIS MEMO
ARE CLASSIFIED SECRET

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1 NOV 1993

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[REDACTED]

8. El Salvador: In the opinion of C/LA/DDO, the government of El Salvador is truly trying to do something about the right-wing death squads. When Avila was picked up by the civilians for suspected death squad activities and was released, the military re-arrested him. In addition to taking action on the death squads, the military is now appointing good people to key positions. We have now seen the first instance of meritorious promotions, which is a dramatic development. There have also been instances where commanders were fired for incompetence. Recently a Lieutenant Colonel was given a brigade command with two Colonels serving as subordinates. A lot more needs to be done in the area of tactics, such as fighting at night. In order to improve dramatically, however, the Salvadorean Army needs assurances of constant military supplies. The on and off again supply system from the U.S. has a debilitating affect.

[REDACTED]

OLL 85-1042
4 April 1985

MEMORANDUM FOR: EPS/LG

FROM:

Liaison Division, OLL

SUBJECT:

HPSCI Staffer Giza's Follow-up Request
Regarding Honduran Death Squad Investigation

1. Dick Giza called on 3 April to ask the following follow-up questions on the papers he received on 27 March:

b. We mentioned that we found no connection between D'Aubuisson and "Lau." He finds it strange that the name "Lau" appeared in the D'Aubuisson papers. How do we explain this?

2. Please respond by 11 April.

05920950
OADR

SEARCHED INDEXED
SERIALIZED FILED
APR 11 1985
FBI - NEW YORK

[REDACTED]

SUBJECT: Responses to HPSCI Staffer Dick Giza's Follow-up
Queries Re Honduran Death Squads

[REDACTED]

QUESTION B: If there is no connection between D'Aubuisson
and "Lau", how do we explain the appearance of
the name "Lau"?

B. A review of our copy of the D'Aubuisson papers--which are
also known as the Majano papers--did not surface the name
"Lau", "Ricardo Lau", or "Chino Lau". As can be seen from the
attached page taken from the so-called D'Aubuisson papers, only
the name "Chino" appears, with an apparent local Salvadoran
phone number. There is no indication that "Chino" refers to
Ricardo Lau. In fact, "Chino" is a Spanish nickname widely
used throughout Latin America and is not derived from any given
first name. If the Committee can furnish a copy in which the
name "Lau" is cited, the Agency will check further into this
matter.

Attachment

[REDACTED]

26 Mar 198

EL SALVADOR: Reaction to Romero's Assassination

Public reaction to Archbishop Romero's assassination is only now beginning to develop, but there have been no widespread demonstrations so far. Unless the junta's investigation produces quick results, Salvadorans will be increasingly likely to blame the government. In the meantime, yesterday's sporadic guerrilla bombings in the capital probably will continue throughout the three-day mourning period.

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29 Mar 1980

EL SALVADOR: Status Report

The repercussions of the assassination of Archbishop Romero--including cabinet resignations and strong international criticism--is eroding the junta's legitimacy.

Three cabinet officials--two of whom are prominent Christian Democrats--resigned Thursday and left the country because of the government's failure to curb rightwing violence. Their departure could prompt more defections from the government.

//Extremist violence continues, but increasingly aggressive search operations by security forces are taking a toll on the left. One leftist guerrilla group may have decided to suspend activities, and the propaganda campaign of the radical front organisation has been seriously hampered.//

//The left also may be influenced by advice which sees Romero's killing as a rightwing ploy to draw the left into an armed showdown with the military. reportedly has counseled against street demonstrations for the time being.//

Nonetheless, some radical elements--which have already accused the US of complicity in Romero's murder--probably intend to turn the massive funeral procession planned for tomorrow into an antigovernment demonstration.

The assassination of Romero has hardened international opinion against the junta. At its meeting in Santo Domingo this week, the Socialist International formally condemned both the Salvadoran Government and US support for the junta. Nicaragua's withdrawal of its Ambassador may presage a formal diplomatic break--if major violence persists; Mexico apparently is contemplating a similar move. The possibility of significant aid to the junta from Latin American and European countries appears increasingly remote.

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[REDACTED]

EL SALVADOR: Moves Toward Cooperation

The Congress Assembly has agreed to a plan of agrarian reform, and Defense Minister Garcia [REDACTED] will submit his resignation.

The liberal Christian Democrats reached a compromise last week with some hardline and moderate conservatives to win extension of the controversial "land to the tiller" program through the end of the year. Assembly leader D'Aubuisson and his National Republican Alliance voted against the proposal.

[REDACTED], Garcia recently told President Magana and the military high command that he would offer a letter of resignation and honor it if necessary. Participants [REDACTED] agreed that a way must be found to convict and imprison National Guard Lieutenant Lopez Sibrian--accused of the assassination of two US labor advisers and the head of Salvadoran land reform in 1981. [REDACTED]

Comment: The trend toward cooperation is continuing despite the fragility of the coalition government. In the past two weeks, rival political parties have agreed to a national pacification plan, a formal peace commission, an earlier date for presidential elections, and continued agrarian reform.

Renewed efforts to prosecute Lopez Sibrian could increase friction within the government and the military. The departure of Garcia, however, would help to ease tensions, at least temporarily. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

4 May 1981

EL SALVADOR-US: Legal Defeat in Murder Case

President Magana [REDACTED] will pursue other means of prosecution following recent judicial setbacks in the cases of those accused in the murders of two US labor officials in 1981 [REDACTED]

An appellate court has ruled that it does not have sufficient evidence to continue prosecution of Lt. Lopez Sibrian, who allegedly gave the order and provided the weapons for the killings. The decision affirms a lower court finding of last year that enabled Lopez Sibrian to return to active duty. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] the state has one year to introduce new evidence or the case will be closed, although it can then be appealed to the Supreme Court. Meanwhile, he is preparing an appeal to the Supreme Court to overturn lower court rulings in favor of others involved in the murders, one of whom is living in Miami. (S)

Magana [REDACTED] will push for additional appeals regarding Lopez Sibrian. [REDACTED] considering invoking an emergency decree that empowers the government to make arrests on suspicion of terrorism or subversion. [REDACTED]

Comment: The court's refusal to rule in favor of the state suggests it again has been intimidated by extreme rightists. The evidence against Lopez Sibrian is formidable and includes confessions by the two who did the killing. The chances of successful prosecution are likely to diminish the longer the case drags on in the courts. [REDACTED]

Magana, [REDACTED] the emergency decree, is concerned that the judicial setback will jeopardize US assistance. Nevertheless, the decree previously has been applied exclusively to suspected insurgents or their sympathizers, and its application in this case would encounter opposition from extreme rightists and some elements in the military. The strongest objection could come from Vides, who might argue that invoking the decree would threaten military unity and the prosecution of the war. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

EL SALVADOR: Military Developments

The insurgents apparently are planning a major attack in central El Salvador late this month [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] the guerrillas are planning a new operation in the Guazapa Volcano area, following their successful sabotage attacks last month against several key bridges in the east. Guerrilla units [REDACTED] are preparing to move [REDACTED] to the Guazapa area. They have obtained a large quantity of [REDACTED] for the operation. [REDACTED]

Meanwhile, the insurgents are claiming a major victory in an attack earlier this week on the town of Cinquera and a subsequent ambush of government reinforcements. [REDACTED] they killed 90 government soldiers, took 20 prisoners, and captured at least 90 rifles and several heavier weapons. [REDACTED]

The government alleges that the insurgents massacred 100 civilians and 16 captured soldiers in the fighting at Cinquera. Insurgent massacres have occurred occasionally in the past, particularly against members of local civil defense units and their relatives. Such units have often been accused of atrocities against guerrilla sympathizers. [REDACTED]

In another operation, the guerrillas claim to have clashed with an elite government airborne company, killing many of its troops. [REDACTED]

Comment: The insurgents may be planning a series of major sabotage actions in central El Salvador to coincide with attacks on isolated government garrisons. They followed this pattern in the east last month, when they attacked Santa Rosa de Lima and blew up key bridges on the Inter-American and Coastal Highways. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] charges of a massacre at Cinquera may be accurate. [REDACTED] It is not insurgent policy to shoot prisoners but rather to release soldiers and detain officers. The [REDACTED] killing of captured troops in Cinquera may strengthen government efforts to persuade local military garrisons to stand and fight rather than surrender. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

EL SALVADOR: Extreme Rightist Activity

Assembly leader (i) Aubuisson has indicated that elements of the military and security forces are engaging in illegal actions against alleged subversives [REDACTED]

D'Aubuisson has told [REDACTED] that military and security personnel are planning to eliminate suspected leftists. He noted that corruption and political pressures often protect insurgent sympathizers in their operations and said that safeguarding human rights is impossible as long as the war continues. The Assembly leader also advocated a more aggressive war strategy, including "extra-official" operations [REDACTED]

Meanwhile, Col. Nicolas Carranza, who has extensive ties to D'Aubuisson, is lobbying to be named Armed Forces Chief of Staff. Carranza has a reputation as a strong leader but was isolated by former Defense Minister Garcia, who felt threatened by his political ambitions and feared he would undercut efforts to keep the military out of partisan politics [REDACTED]

Comment: D'Aubuisson's candid admissions—which are tacit support for the existence of death squads—may also reflect the belief that the extreme right can expand its influence now that Garcia has been replaced as defense minister by the less dynamic General Vides. Moreover, chances are increasing that extreme rightist violence will escalate as political prisoners are released under the new amnesty law [REDACTED]

Carranza's lobbying may become a serious dilemma for Vides. The Defense Minister probably recognizes that Carranza's presence on the General Staff might help him conduct a more aggressive war strategy. At the same time, the appointment of Carranza to a high military post probably would result in renewed politicization of the armed forces. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

EL SALVADOR: Terrorist Campaign

The largest and most radical of the five Salvadoran antigovernment factions may be stepping up its terrorist tactics

[REDACTED]

The Popular Liberation Front has claimed responsibility for the assassination of Commander Schauffelberger in San Salvador last week. [REDACTED] the leaders of the operation received special congratulations. [REDACTED]

Meanwhile, a [REDACTED] says guerrillas executed a number of government soldiers who surrendered during an insurgent attack on a bridge in San Vicente Department last week. More than 40 of the 82 defenders reportedly died as a result of the attack. [REDACTED] the Popular Liberation Front also was responsible for that operation. [REDACTED]

Comment: The Front may be seeking revenge for the deaths of its two top leaders in Managua last month. The insurgents publicly blamed the US for the killings, although [REDACTED] indicate an internal feud led to the murders. After the deaths, the Front apparently murdered several captured soldiers after taking Cinquera in central El Salvador. [REDACTED]

By killing the US adviser, the insurgents probably hope to bring new attention to the US military presence in El Salvador and stimulate opposition in the US to any increase. They may attempt similar killings in Honduras, where the US plans to send more advisers in conjunction with the opening of a new center that will train Salvadoran units in counterinsurgency tactics. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

EL SALVADOR: Rightist Violence

Ultrarightist, apparently are using "death squad" activities to discourage adoption of liberal reforms in the draft constitution and support for a dialogue with the insurgents [REDACTED]

Union leaders lobbying for the adoption of articles in the constitution that would establish more rights for workers and peasants have been the main targets of recent bombings. Bombs also have exploded near the homes of outspoken supporters of peace talks with insurgents [REDACTED] some of the victims claim that Roberto D'Aubuisson's party is doing much of the rightwing violence. [REDACTED]

Labor organizations claim that 10 workers and peasants were killed by death squads earlier this month. Union leaders believe the death squads are well financed. They claim the terrorists have the support of some industrialists, landholders, members of the armed forces, and at least one prominent jurist. [REDACTED]

Terrorists reportedly fired on the National Conciliation Party headquarters on 7 September, and they continue to threaten party leaders. The party forms a key part of a center-right coalition in the Assembly that is generally in opposition to the ultraright. [REDACTED] some party members, the terrorists hope to intimidate them into joining D'Aubuisson's group in the assembly. [REDACTED]

Comment: Rightwing terrorism is likely to continue as the Assembly debates articles on unionism and the future of agrarian reform. The violence also is aimed at discouraging support for any real dialogue between the government and the leftist insurgents. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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Special Analysis

EL SALVADOR: Threat From the Right

The more selective use of violence by extremists of the far right reflects the fear that they will lose political influence as the country moves toward presidential elections early next year. They also are frustrated by their failure to reverse the reform process, by the armed forces' loss of momentum on the battlefield, and by the government's dialogue with the insurgents. Efforts to curb their terrorist activity will continue to be hampered by the organizational independence of death squads and vigilante groups, as well as by the weak resolve of government and military authorities.

To eliminate challenges to its power, the far right traditionally has used civilian vigilante organizations, elements of the armed forces, and death squads funded and led by wealthy elites. Compartmentation, a rigid code of secrecy, and the shifting whims of extremist leaders make estimating numbers of the terrorist organizations and their personnel difficult.

The breadth of terrorist operations, however, suggests that perhaps a dozen groups may be active at any given time. Some groups frequently coordinate their activities, and a few occasionally engage in violent rivalries with each other.

Violence remains especially severe in the countryside, where elements such as the Territorial Service and Civil Defense Forces—which provide local security and collect intelligence for the military—function as peasant vigilantes. In addition, civilian mercenaries and fanatics allied with specific individuals or political groupings routinely wage their own vendettas against suspected subversives and personal enemies. Civilian terrorists also employ both active-duty and retired military personnel in their campaigns.

Death squads in the Army and the three security forces apparently operate out of urban military headquarters and rural outposts. They are led by senior enlisted personnel and junior officers, and they may function with or without the knowledge of immediate superiors. Some may owe allegiance to military officers from other units or be on the payroll of civilian sponsors (S NF)

continued

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Motivations and Tactics

Although the level of violence against suspected subversives remains fairly steady, the increasing selectivity of terrorist operations reflects the extreme right's growing sense of political isolation and weakness. Extremists have stepped up operations against union leaders and others that they fear might rally labor behind the Christian Democrats in the election. They also are intimidating government, military, and Church officials who are supporting economic reforms.

Despite these efforts, Constituent Assembly President D'Aubuisson and other extremist leaders are likely to be deeply concerned about their failure to form a coalition that can protect their base of power. Although they have impeded efforts by moderate conservatives and liberals in the Assembly to codify land and other reforms, they have failed to halt these measures. Moreover, their sense of frustration is heightened by government efforts to develop a dialogue with the insurgents.

D'Aubuisson and other rightwing leaders now appear to believe, probably correctly, that the armed forces will be crucial in determining their future role in national politics. Consequently, a minority of officers aligned with or sympathetic to D'Aubuisson's National Republican Alliance is maneuvering for greater power in the military.

The group hopes to take advantage of the conservative political orientation of Defense Minister Vides by trying to insert itself into the military hierarchy. Rightists also are urging Vides to adopt a more aggressive strategy on the battlefield and to assume a more direct political role on behalf of the military in the government.

Constraints on Moderation

The far right's growing influence in the military—the only institution that can quell extremist violence—is making Vides's position increasingly difficult. The Defense Minister's adherence to moderate and pragmatic leadership underscores his desire to maintain armed forces unity while also ensuring greater cooperation and material aid from Washington. At the same time he probably feels obligated to respect the prevailing consensus of the senior officer corps on issues potentially embarrassing to the military.

continued

[REDACTED]

Vides is further constrained by the knowledge that some of his most effective commanders are ambitious allies of D'Aubuisson. In addition, he almost certainly realizes that some of them have knowledge of, or are directly involved with, terrorist organizations. Mr. [REDACTED] of the late of his moderate predecessor, General Garcia, V [REDACTED] probably is unwilling to risk his own position by forcing a halt to extralegal activities [REDACTED]

The country's corrupt and paralyzed judicial system and weak and fractious civilian government also impede any national leader from clamping down on terrorism. This has been underscored by the lack of progress in a three-year legal case involving National Guardsman who publicly confessed to murdering two US labor advisers [REDACTED]

The killers have yet to be brought to trial. Moreover, two junior officers who are said to have ordered the murders and furnished the weapons are believed to be under protection from prosecution by rightist military officers aligned with D'Aubuisson's political party. [REDACTED]

Outlook

Growing public scrutiny of death-squad activity may provide some temporary constraints on the ultraright as it weighs the possible effect of the squads' activities on US and other foreign support. Nevertheless, external pressure on the military to purge itself of extremists could provoke deep nationalistic resentment against foreign personnel. It also may increase tensions between moderates and the far right as the elections approach [REDACTED]

The threat of extremist violence, therefore, is likely to grow in direct proportion to the level of rightist frustration with the political situation and, to a lesser extent, with the inability of the armed forces to wage a more effective counterinsurgency effort. Over time, such pressure could prompt conservative military officers and their civilian allies to plot against Vides and any other leaders whom they may come to view as threatening their interests [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

EL SALVADOR: Reaction to Military Shakeup

[REDACTED] says the officer corps has reacted positively to recent command changes. [REDACTED] indicated the changes have strengthened the authority of Defense Minister Vides and have encouraged him to try to eliminate the death squads. Vides and his deputy [REDACTED] considering ways to investigate and neutralize rightwing terrorists [REDACTED]

Comment: The recent transfers of more competent—but hardline rightist—officers to key line units may improve combat performance and help reduce internal dissatisfaction with the military hierarchy. Nevertheless, most officers probably are unwilling at this point to turn against colleagues engaged in illegal activities. As a result, Vides's ability to move against the death squads remains questionable. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

FRIDAY, 20 January

EL SALVADOR: Continued Detention of Murder Suspect

The announcement of the continued detention without specific charges of Captain Avila, who is implicated in the murder of two US labor officials in 1981, may cause serious legal and political problems for the Salvadoran Government.

President Magana, Defense Minister Vides, and several top military and security officials reluctantly agreed to detain Avila beyond the legal 30-day period, which expired on Wednesday. [REDACTED] that he expects problems from all sides—especially from the Supreme Court and the Legislative Assembly—but that he is prepared to risk his own position by illegally detaining Avila.

Comment: Public reaction against the decision is likely to be strong, and the government's concern is justified. Moreover, extreme rightist officers, charging US interference with the military establishment, may again try to oust Vides. Unless new charges can be lodged soon against Avila, the government probably will have to release him.

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[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
8 FEB 80

EL SALVADOR:

New Terrorist Campaign

Leftist guerrillas appear intent on staging more terrorist attacks in the capital, and killings by rightwing death squads have picked up in the past week. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] reports that guerrillas late last month photographed a US citizen who previously had been targeted for killing and were awaiting approval from the rebel leadership before making an attack. [REDACTED] says the guerrillas are watching other US personnel and are combing the same area of San Salvador where 13 people—including six US citizens—were killed last June.

[REDACTED] terrorist plan to attack the chief of the US military advisory group. An [REDACTED] in the plan said the attack—a bombing of the officer's residence—would be coordinated between two urban guerrilla groups. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] guerrillas are planning to place bombs in the San Salvador area. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] one of the rebel groups has [REDACTED] in the metropolitan area who are prepared to step up urban violence. [REDACTED]

Meanwhile, rightwing death squads are presumed responsible for the murders of seven Salvadoreans over the past week. Authorities discovered the bodies of four peasants this week; last Sunday the bodies of three young men were found in San Salvador. [REDACTED]

Comment: The guerrillas appear intent on stepping up violence in the capital following government military pressure on rebel bases in rural areas. The rightist violence, possibly in response to peasant and labor unrest over a series of unpopular economic measures President Duarte imposed last month, may continue to grow. If the left carries out its plans for urban violence, elements of the extreme right are likely to respond with similar methods. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]
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[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
14 APR 86

EL SALVADOR: Reactions to Arrests

Current investigations of rightist civilians and military officers involved in kidnaping plots are likely to strengthen the government's credibility on human rights issues, but political problems may arise if the plot widens [REDACTED] that at least 20 civilians, military officers, and enlisted personnel have been implicated in, and several arrested for, the criminal abductions of businessmen over the past three years. Initial public reaction to the arrests, even within conservative opposition groups and the armed forces, has been favorable [REDACTED]

Comment: The government so far appears to have resisted the temptation to use these arrests to attack the rightist opposition. If the case widens to implicate additional prominent military and civilian personnel in other criminal or terrorist activities, however, conservative interest groups and the armed forces are likely to mount a campaign to force President Duarte to limit the scope of these investigations [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
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[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

27 MAY 86

EL SALVADOR: Military Seizes Investigation

The armed forces have taken control from civilian authorities in the two-month-old investigation of military personnel involved in kidnaping for profit. [REDACTED]
The case will be handled by military courts under Decree 30, a special legal provision that gives the military jurisdiction over cases involving subversion and terrorism. [REDACTED] earlier this month that the accused leader of the kidnap ring—Lieutenant Colonel Staben—was released for "lack of evidence," while some accomplices, including another important line officer, Lieutenant Colonel Zacapa, remain at large. Three suspected members of the crime ring have died in suspicious circumstances—two while in police custody and another after being released from jail temporarily. [REDACTED]

Comment: Pressures within the armed forces probably are behind the unprecedented application of Decree 30 to criminal activity by military personnel. Military courts probably will limit the scope of the investigation, which could tarnish the international image of justice in El Salvador. Civilian investigators were making progress in developing evidence implicating Staben, Zacapa, and at least 20 others. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
31 OCT 87

EL SALVADOR: Murder Derails Government-Rebel Talks

Salvadoran guerrillas are using the murder of a human rights leader earlier this week to break off cease-fire talks and try to undermine the Duarte government's credibility on human rights. The guerrillas boycotted negotiations that were to begin yesterday, and their supporters in San Salvador staged demonstrations charging the government and the US with complicity in the crime. Earlier in the week, the only opposition member of the National Reconciliation Commission resigned, citing the government's inability to control violence. The government exempted the still-unknown killers from the amnesty decree approved this week, assigning the case to its special investigations unit. [REDACTED]

Comment: Although there is no evidence of official complicity in the crime, it gives the guerrillas an excuse to torpedo the peace talks that had put them on the defensive. By implicitly threatening the safety of guerrilla political leaders who planned to return to San Salvador—Ruben Zamora and Guillermo Ungo—the murder serves the interests of both the far right and the radical left. The far right fears that the returning leftist politicians will engage in subversive activities, and some guerrilla leaders may be worried that letting their political allies into the electoral system would further erode the legitimacy of their insurgency. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

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